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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Vietnam (Again)

AT THE moment it is not at all clear what President Johnson is prepared to do about Vietnam. The resignation of Roger Hilsman as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, and the dispatching of Secretary McNamara to Saigon may be signs that a major shift in policy is near. On the other hand, they may be routine moves intended largely to underline the U.S. commitment, rally the South Vietnamese and ease Communist pressure by hinting at some drastic new policy.

The statements on the subject from official Washington shed no additional light. The extraordinary public discussion of whether we should bomb or invade Communist North Vietnam may mean that President Johnson is seriously considering such action and simply cannot keep a tight lip on his aides. But it could also mean that talk of direct American action against North Vietnam is itself the weapon, intended more for Communist consumption than anything else. The President himself has fed this impression by the vagueness of his warnings to the North Vietnamese.

From the point of view of domestic politics, the President would clearly be better off to postpone a policy change until after the November elections. But no one now thinks that the pot will simmer quietly for eight months. Two rapid coups, General De Gaulle's neutralization proposal, and the increasing boldness of the Viet Cong have suddenly made it clear that stalemate is not the worst thing the U.S. can suffer in Vietnam. Commentators now talk evenly about the Viet Cong's chances for winning the war, and the fear is that another coup in South Vietnam could herald a complete collapse. As appalling as the thought of neutralization may be, it is even worse to consider that the U.S. now operates from such a position of weakness that the Communists might not be willing to discuss it.

For the short run, then, the prescription is not perplexing: the U.S. must build up its position in Vietnam, and despite Ambassador Lodge's pieties about not interfering with internal South Vietnamese politics, our interests clearly lie in stabilizing the regime and preventing another coup.

BUT WHAT next? General De Gaulle has chosen not to spell out his version of neutralization, but the suspicion is that it would amount to little more than a face-saving way for the U.S. to withdraw and hope for the best. It is unlikely that De Gaulle would care to send in French troops, and without any Western forces, Vietnam would remain non-Communist only as long as China decided to permit it. Guerrilla action against North Vietnam, certainly less dangerous than bombardment and invasion, would amount to little more than harassment in defense of the current stalemate. Bombardment is a policy based on the assumption that the North Vietnam regime can be quickly brought down without the intervention of the Chinese. Even if it can be, the Viet Cong could turn out to be just as potent a threat without support from Hanoi.

Assuming that the Chinese would stand by while the United States overthrew and occupied North Vietnam—which is quite an assumption—the picture would still not look particularly bright. First, there would be the problem of Chinese "volunteers" operating from a sanctuary over the border—the Yalu all over again, and not much of an improvement over North Vietnamese "volunteers" operating from over the South Vietnam border. Secondly, American aggression against North Vietnam, when even the pro-Western sentiments of the South Vietnamese are in considerable doubt, would cost the U.S. dearly throughout Asia and cast China, with its anti-Western racial policies, as the protector that the U.S. would like to be. All this is apart from the danger of escalation, and the appalling prospects of a prolonged U.S. occupation of North Vietnam.

The point is, then, that there are nothing but

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dangerous and unsatisfactory options. Defeat, as usual, is unthinkable; a South Vietnamese victory has never seemed more unlikely; and neither negotiation nor invasion offers any guarantees. The more one dwells on the possibilities, the more attractive General De Gaulle's admittedly vague call for neutralization appears. Would China settle for a truly neutral state on its border and could a commitment be extracted to erase the dismal version of neutrality on display in Laos? Possibly. China seems content with a neutral Burma, and she may conceive of the elimination of American influence, rather than direct control over Vietnam, as her primary interest here. Whatever the next few months bring, the last few have brought at least an awareness that negotiation cannot be rejected out of hand.

This Side of the Curtain

EVER SINCE 1958, when the present government of the Sudan took over through a military coup, the Khartoum regime has been trying to make a unitary Moslem state out of that large territory which extends far to the South on both sides of the Nile. This is an attempt to merge two quite disparate peoples, one Arab, Moslem and North African, the other (which numbers ten million) Negroid, tribal and pagan, plus a small Christian minority. The two peoples are ancient enemies, and the slave raids of the Arabs into the south—with the operation of three slave-trading stations there—lasted until 1898 and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium.

The North Sudanese have been building mosques throughout the southern provinces. They have closed down the Christian mission schools or taken them over for Moslemization purposes. They have made these provinces a "closed district," shut off from contact with the outside world, seized the natives' means of livelihood, burned native villages and staged public executions of various local leaders, many of them products of the only local schools, which had been conducted by Christian missionaries. Thousands have fled for their lives.

The missionaries, who see thwarted the labors of a hundred years of educating and civilizing what were extremely primitive tribes, have found themselves under continual harassment. With little pretext many of them have been expelled or imprisoned. Now, on the grounds that they are fomenting the recent native uprisings, all three hundred of the remaining foreign missionaries in South Sudan are being expelled. How can such a record of repression square with the following (from a special dispatch to the New York *Times* of February 29): "The military regime headed by General Ibrahim Abboud, President of the Sudan, is generally considered benevolent. Sometimes it is called an easy-going dictatorship. . . ."

South African Bishops

IF IT WEREN'T such an utterly serious matter, we might find it hard to suppress a smile over the recent dispute among the South African bishops. Is there not something familiar in the following situation: Archbishop X issues a statement on a major social issue; the statement is trumpeted by the press as the "official stand" of the Church; Archbishop Y denies that the statement is "official"; Archbishop Z refuses to comment on the difference of opinion between X and Y; and Archbishop X says belatedly, that he was misunderstood.

Unfortunately, the issue in question is too grave a one to be cited as an amusing anecdote illustrating the reality behind the image of the Church as a well-regimented monolith. For it concerns the morality of apartheid in South Africa and the position of the South African Church toward the government policy of apartheid. Archbishop X in this instance is Archbishop William P. Whelan, O.M.I., of Bloemfontein. On February 19 he issued a statement saying that South Africa's current difficulties could be worked out without necessarily abandoning apartheid.

The official South African press agencies then published a statement which said that "the Roman Catholic Church of South Africa today issued a statement clarifying the attitude of the Church toward South Africa's racial policy, apartheid." Whereupon Archbishop Owen McCann of Cape Town said the views of Archbishop Whelan were his personal views only and did not represent the "official" stand of the Church. For his part, Archbishop Denis Hurley, O.M.I., of Durban said that

SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE

By now, those of our readers who are regular subscribers will have received in the mail a letter from the editors. As we mentioned in our issue last week, and in the letter, we would like to add 3,000 new subscribers by April 1. That would bring our circulation up to 35,000 and put us within shooting distance of the 40,000 subscribers we would like to have on the occasion of our 40th anniversary in November. May we ask you again to keep our drive in mind. If any of our readers would like additional order cards we would be happy to supply them.

—THE EDITORS

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apartheid "cannot be pursued without injustice and is therefore not in accord with the Christian ethic." Archbishop John Garner of Pretoria refused to comment at all.

Like most such disputes this one ended in a considerable amount of confusion, but not, unfortunately before the South African government had scored a minor propaganda victory. As far as we can discern, Archbishop Whelan's position does not have the support of the other South African bishops, and this, we hope, will at least be recognized. At the same time, it should be conceded that Archbishop Whelan was able to cite in support of his case a 1952 Bishops' statement which said that "the great majority of non-Europeans and particularly Africans, have not yet reached a state of development justifying integration." That position was "official" and has yet to be denied with equal weight. In South Africa, as elsewhere it would appear, the past weighs heavily against the future, as a source of uncertainty at least.

There is something else to be seen in the South African dispute. No sooner had Archbishop Whelan's statement been publicized than it immediately became a matter of concern to Catholics in many other parts of the world. There was a quick recognition that it is not possible to isolate the thinking of one bishop or body of bishops from the rest of the Church. What even one bishop says today, especially when rapid communications enable the whole world to hear of it, says something about the Church universal. It may not say much, and its meaning may not be clear; but it cannot be dismissed either. At the very least, Archbishop Whelan's position indicates that it is still perfectly possible for high Church leaders to acquiesce in the face of unjust government policies; and worse, to cite Church teaching to justify such a stand.

We ignore these possibilities at our peril. Already some American Negro leaders have become alarmed at the possible implications for the rest of the world of Archbishop Whelan's statement. We think they are wrong to be worried. Nonetheless, they are; and all that the rest of us can do is explain, explain.

HERE AND THERE

In Search of Honesty

Rome

A FEW WEEKS ago, here in Rome, I had dinner with another layman and two theologians. Inevitably, conversation turned to the Ecumenical Council. Someone asked the question: In general terms, what above all would you like to come out of the Council?

One of the theologians said that he would like to see a much broader expansion of the ecumenical movement —a reaching out on the part of Catholics not only to other Christian bodies but to non-Christians as well. There is a common ground held by all religions, he said, and at that point a new confrontation between the different spiritual families of man could be undertaken. Where it would lead, he had no idea; but he had no doubt but that the world and Christianity itself would benefit from a closer relationship between the religions of men and a richer understanding of their spiritual aspirations. What Catholics have to realize, he insisted, is that, however "catholic" the Church is in its essence, as a corporate presence on earth it represents only one among many different religious bodies and, even in Christendom, it is merely the largest among a bewildering number of "sects." Awareness of that fact, he pointed out, is as important to the apostolate as appreciation of the Church's uniqueness.

The second theologian said that he would like to see a burgeoning of theological thought, a re-presentation, in the idiom of modern man, of the perennial truths of Redemption and development of their consequences for the contemporary world. After their fashion, the ancient Catholic modes of thought and of expression may bear the truth, he acknowledged, but they are no longer communicating the truth to modern men. The traditional channels, so to speak, have become private property and unsuitable for the broadcasting of public truths. Catholics by and large have been talking to one another, especially the theologians of the Church, and a way must be found for them to break out of their isolation.

The other layman, whose interests run along theological lines, could not have agreed more. He too emphasized the need for a more vital and relevant presentation of Catholic teaching than can be found in the rigidly scholastic, formula-ridden, unhistorical "propositions," theorems, and theses of seminary manuals. He hoped that the Council would encourage the teachers of the Church to present the Christian message in a more lively, personalist, evangelical and contemporary manner and loosen the dead hand of formalism that has clutched for so long to the Catholic body.

I had been the first to answer. My reply had been shamelessly personal. "I would hope," I had said, "that after the Council it would be easier for a Catholic to be honest." I did not amplify, and at the time I was not quite sure what I meant, for the statement was impulsively given. But as the others spoke, I began to see more clearly what I should have meant. I was not

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charging either myself or fellow-religionists with massive duplicity, nor was I crediting non-believers with an envied honesty; I was, rather, in a fairly clumsy way, expressing the same desires that the theologians had been talking about.

IN A RECENT Commonweal article ("Marriage: The Lay Voice"), Michael Novak, writing about marital sex, cited an example of what I really had in mind. He wrote: "The layman seems intimidated by the difference between the daily reality of marital love, which he knows, and the images presented by priests: he then hesitates to speak for fear of violating orthodoxy."

This is indeed a prime example of the fear of "honesty," but there are others. And nervousness about "violating orthodoxy" or giving scandal is not confined to laymen. It is found among the clergy as well. For it is hard to say who goes to greater trouble to avoid shocking the other—the priest in his relations with the layman, or the layman in his relations with the priest. If it be true that the laity has a special language and manner for dealing with the clergy, it is equally true that the clergy has a special language and manner for the laity. We go through life, on both sides of the great ecclesiastical divide, protecting one another from reality. There are certain words, attitudes, and beliefs that should not be expressed in the presence of priests, the good Catholic feels; so the home should take on the atmosphere of a super-orthodox monastery when the Father visits. The priest is convinced that there are certain reticences Father should observe when he is with the laity, for they would not understand. He too then has one way of talking to his fellow priests and another way of talking to parishioners.

The result is that clergy and laity are so anxious not to unsettle one another that both find themselves playing roles. There is consequently a great deal of bantering, polite chit-chat, and cheerful evasion to ease the situation, but, always with exceptions, little meeting of minds. As Mr. Novak indicates, the layman, unsure of himself in the alien world of theology, frequently avoids expressing his deepest religious concerns, lest they disedify Father. Father, seeing the moral universe in categories that have more to do with the textbook world of his seminary days than with the experienced world of his parishioners, appears to be cut off from reality and no one wants to disturb him.

Michael Novak's example is a good one, sex and marriage. The marital state as it is depicted in most clergy-written books has little to do with the reality experienced by millions of lay Catholics. The priest's understanding of the family vocation is frequently quite as deficient as the layman's understanding of the priestly life. Both know the general outlines of the other's vocation, in a bloodless, schematic way, of course. But there is a kind of knowledge that can be purchased only by experience, and in both cases it is lacking. To cite Mr. Novak, again, this is particularly true of the sexual side of marriage. One need only have been married as short a time as Michael Novak himself has been to know the falseness lurking in the average Catholic treatise on the subject. I know hardly a married layman who when he runs across such material doesn't smile knowingly. Happily, few laymen read widely in that area of theological thought. But even those who do are hesitant to call attention, at least in public, to how wide of the mark the understanding is.

Privately, there is a general understanding that the theological writers frequently do not know what they are talking about. But, until Michael Novak came along, this has been one of the best-kept lay secrets. Now the secret is out, and it will be interesting to see what the reactions are. I suspect Mr. Novak will be reminded of the long hours parish priests spend in the confessional and in counseling. But that should not destroy his case.

The point is that the "marriage" dealt with in the confessional is frequently not the daily experience the layman knows at first hand but the structural creation of the textbooks; it is in relation to this supposed model that the reality of his experience is measured. Where moral judgment is at stake, reality always has to be measured against a norm or ideal, of course. There is no argument here. But what bothers some of the more restive laity is that the norm itself is unsatisfactory, to the degree that it is based on those deficient understandings of the sexual relationship which are derived from a lawyerly emphasis on "rights," "duties," "ends," "primary and secondary purposes" and all the rest. Deprived of its living flesh and life-giving blood, the skeleton of marriage may indeed look as grotesque as it appears in the manuals—but it still remains a skeleton, unrecognizable and offensive to those who are used to the living body.

HOWEVER pertinent, Michael Novak's example of marital sex is only one example of what I had in mind, consciously or unconsciously, when I blurted out that above all I would welcome the opportunity to be more easily honest.

Actually, I was hoping for a much broader, more open, more free-for-all discussion of religious issues in the Church, with widespread lay participation. I was not thinking of the development of "lay theologians," though there is certainly no objection to adding to their number. I was thinking, rather, of the creation of an atmosphere, within the Catholic community, where there would be more confrontation of theologian and untutored layman—untutored in the science of theology that is; less fear of incorrect or imprecise expressions of theological concerns, on the part of the laity; more patience on the part of theologians and willingness to

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understand what the laity are saying, in their own uncultivated language; and with less concern for the niceties of theological terminology, a stronger emphasis on genuine communication. I would like to see the layman feel free to express his convictions, doubts, and dissents without fear of "violating orthodoxy" or seeming to be brash, and I would like to see the theologian as anxious to master the factual realities of life as the moral principles of their trade before they make their pronouncements.

It is, I realize, hard to know where to draw the line. Of course one does not want a revival of the days, not so long ago, when the Dead-Eyed Dicks among the theologians were ever ready to turn against the most innocent expression of what they deemed heretical views. That situation silenced generations of laymen and non-theologians among the clergy as well, and much was lost because they did not feel free to speak. On the other hand, one should be wary of the instant theologians among the laity who feel that a more open Church means that their opinions deserve to be ranked with those of Jesuit faculties or Curial cardinals. There is always the possibility that such people will overdo.

But there is a happy balance between these two extremes, isn't there? A middle ground. I would like to see more laymen occupying this middle ground, speaking candidly, in their own language, about what is on their minds, neither shocking nor being shocked. I would like to know that even the best theologians are listening to them. And when there is no self-consciousness or unworthy inhibition on either side, then I think there will be the "honesty" I hoped might come more easily to all of us in the years ahead. JOHN COGLEY

(John Cogley, formerly one of the editors of The Commonweal, is a staff member of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. He is currently in Rome.)

John P. Sisk

The Mirrors of Advertising

More than serious literature and art, advertising reflects the real interests of most people

SOME YEARS AGO James Wechsler, editor of the New York *Post,* wrote an article for the *Saturday Review* entitled "The Techniques of Showmanship" in which he attempted to justify the sensationalism of the tabloid newspaper and to point out its advantages as a champion of liberal causes. One cannot carry a liberal program to the people unless he catches their interest, he argued, and all the records seemed to indicate that the people's interests run heavily to "crimes of passion and passionate crimes." It seemed to Mr. Wechsler, in fact, that if one judged a newspaper according to the accuracy with which it reflected the interests of the age, then the New York *News* was superior to the *Times.*

Mr. Wechsler's argument interests me less as it applies to tabloid newspapers than as it might be applied to advertising. Literary and artistic people are prone to think that the truest mirror of an age can be found in its serious literature, its music, its painting and its architecture. It strikes me, however, that in a modern pluralistic democracy serious literature and art reflect a period inadequately and even misleadingly in many respects. So far as the real interests of most people are concerned, advertising might be a much more adequate mirror.

The extent to which ads are historical records is clear if one takes the magazines of the depression years and works forward in time, observing the gradual evolution of the present moment in clothing, hair styles, cosmetics, automobiles, foods, fads, anodynes and industrial and domestic machinery. One might object that to record the surface of time one needs the camera rather than the advertisement, since the ad, being fundamentally rhetorical, idealizes and exaggerates in the interest of persuading. But the first function of idealization and hyperbole in all manner of communication is to clarify and define. The paradox of distortion in the arts holds for the pseudo-art of advertising, and in certain important respects the ad defines and clarifies the surface of time better than the camera can, just as in an important respect a caricature can define a human face better than a photograph can.

In *The Human Use of Human Beings* Norbert Wiener speaks of the "shift in point of view of physics in which the world as it actually exists is replaced in some sense or other by the world as it happens to be observed." The adman is unwittingly in accord with the modern physi-

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cist, for he records his world not so much as it is but as it appears to be to most people and perhaps to a certain extent to all people. And it is a mistake to think of him as imposing a view of reality; he is only the pseudo-poet giving heightened expression to a common view, however erroneous that may be.

THE GAP between the world as it is and the world as it is observed is, among other things, the measure of myth, and advertising is valuable as a historical record in that it mirrors the myths men use to organize the information that threatens to overwhelm them and to express dramatically their fears, their values and their hopes. Thus in advertising, remembering Professor Wiener again, we see a record of the modern American's attempt to create an entropy-resisting enclave in which an ideal order is mythically established against the threat of an encroaching disorganization in the real order.

Perhaps no single myth is more apparent in advertising, or more important for Americans, than the myth of Utopia, the dream of a perfect felicity in a state of material and sensuous luxury. It is interesting to observe the dramatic expression of this myth intensify over a thirty-year period as techniques of persuasion improve, color is more extensively and more effectively used and words are more and more subordinated to non-verbal devices. One is struck with the infrequency with which luxury items and services (as we now understand them) were advertised in the thirties. After the war there is a striking change, and the image of life in America, as projected in technicolor fantasies of motor boats, pleasure resorts, jet plane travel, food, liquor, sporting equipment and sport cars approximates that of Edmund Spenser's Bower of Bliss, that "most daintie Paradise on ground."

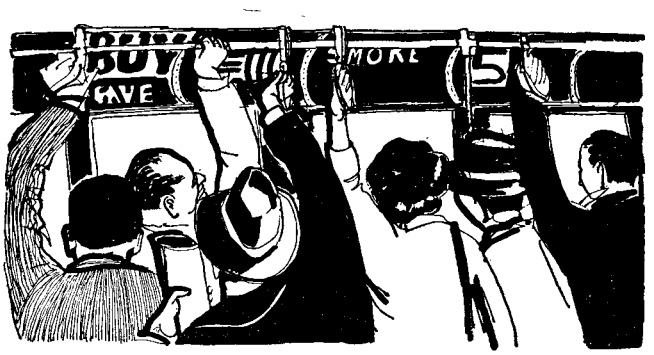
The image of Utopian abundance needs the sense of uncluttered spaciousness that is increasingly conveyed in the post-war ad. The ad that is crowded with text and busy with pictorial detail is not entirely a thing of the past, but it suggests a too frugal and niggardly spirit, a too old fashioned uneasiness about limits, to be characteristic now. In the dream of Utopia that compels the American, space means freedom to extend one's wishes to their utmost reach, means an abundance of life. The uncluttered spaciousness of the post-war ad must be seen in relation to the popularity of suburban and country living, to the ease and speed with which one can communicate either in person or by message with distant places, to the space flights—even to those free-wheeling paragons of virility who in cigarette ads defy lung cancer as intrepidly as their prototypes defied desperadoes and Indians on the Western Plains. Utopia is a place where you are not fenced in. The ad liberates by removing fences; it therefore dramatizes an American myth about space.

Advertisements also record the fact that during and since the war the myth of the unfenced Utopia has been increasingly eroticized. Nothing is more striking than the contrast between the use of the female figure in the relatively austere and parsimonious early thirties and the affluent post-war years. In the July 1930 *Ladies' Home Journal*, for instance, the Mum ad is a one-quarter page black and white display, two-thirds of which is text and one-third of which represents a lady modestly applying the product. In July of 1947 the Mum ad in the same magazine is a half-page and most of that space is given over to a saucy sylph in panty and bra, and we are already well into the era of the Madison Avenue striptease.

IN THE POPULAR image Utopia is a technicolor wonderland in which sensual gratification is complete, effortless and infinite: is, in other words, what sex is when the secularized, exacerbated imagination daydreams about it. In our culture the most effective way to dramatize the ability of anything to satisfy is to link it with sex. There are relatively few products or services that cannot and have not been eroticized. This is the era of the Woodbury Deb, the Revlon Temptress, Miss Rheingold and the Maidenform Dreamer, the emblematic figures that reign over a fairyland in which the untattered emblems are the bikini and the bra.

One can see all this in its Freudean intensity in a Revlon ad in *Seventeen* for lipstick and nail polish. Here against a two-page full-color Polynesian background an auburn-haired beauty wearing a passion-red lounging garment is draped invitingly on a bamboo ladder leading, presumably, to a palm-thatched love nest. Sex and power are here interchangeable terms, as they are in those ads that juxtapose auto and beautiful woman, and in which it is hard to determine whether the adjectives apply to the woman or the machine, so synonymous are the two as symbols of liberation.

In the Revlon ad the power to seize and to hold a Utopian condition comes not from any intrinsic quality of character, not as the earned prize of a disciplined striving after the fashion of the classic American success story, but automatically as the result of possessing a secularized sacred object. Here it is lipstick. Elsewhere in the fabulous world of advertising it is deodorants, laxatives (though less of these now than in the constipated thirties), tooth paste, hair cream, cigarettes, sun-



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tan oil, soap, vitamins, unsaturated fat, queen bee jelly, estrogen cream, fad foods, outboard motors. Here we have a transformation of the romantic myth of nature, an unconscious parody of the transcendental conviction that to put oneself in contact with physical nature is to make oneself susceptible to elemental sources of power.

The myth of Utopia necessarily demands an optimistic myth of experience. It is apparent as one examines the ads of the last thirty years that Americans have been finding it easier to suppress their Puritan doubts about the rightness of committing themselves to the life of the senses. This is evident not only in the increasing number of luxury ads but in the frankness with which in recent years the public can be urged to pursue vigorously *la dolce vita.*

The supreme symbol of an unreserved commitment to experience is, of course, the idealized female figure with its promise of abundant life. The conviction that the experience of sex gathers into itself all experience, and that to pursue sex vigorously is to pursue life itself to the heart of its mysteries, is of course older than modern advertising. But outside the mythical world of advertising this conviction often involves an awareness of hazards to be encountered.

In Hemingway, for instance, the relishing of experience, whether it be sex or bull fighting or big game hunting or war, is inseparable from a heroic facing up to the risk of death which terminates all experience. Time in Hemingway's fiction resembles the daydream time of advertising in that it too tends to be a succession of moment-by-moment intensities. But there is also in Hemingway, despite a resolute rejection of history, a poignant awareness of mutability. This awareness is inadmissible in advertising in which we see magnified and vulgarized the American's traditional myth of time—his conviction that he is dispensed from an old down-running time order, that by divine ordination America itself is an entropy-resisting enclave.

THE ADVERTISEMENT not only expresses a myth of experience, but is itself sensational experience, for it must compete for public attention against sensationally organized information of the sort that Mr. Wechsler tried to justify in his articles. As it competes, it not only supplies the hyperbolic mirrors that are such an important factor in modern man's effort to define himself and his environment but it affords schooling in the processing and evaluation of information. In this school a cardinal principle inculcated is that the value of information is in proportion to the striking or sensational display that can be made of it—a principle which might be harmless enough for an ideally informed and sophisticated public, but which for a mass audience can only reinforce a natural and quixotic tendency to identify the world as it actually exists with the most dramatically acceptable ways of viewing it.

The world as it actually exists is, of course, anything but the eroticized unfenced Utopia in which time is always on our side and in which we can always safely abandon ourselves to experience. It is tempting therefore to look at advertising as the American's ingenious device to keep himself off the seamy back streets of life where his natural innocence might be corrupted by shocking or disillusioning experience: where he might discover the devilish ingenuity with which lust masquerades as love, or learn of the dark liaison between time and entropy, of the horrors of those empty spaces that terrified Pascal, or of the jungle of raw experience in which all but the brave, the disciplined or the fortunate are so easily lost.

ONE MUST, of course, make the necessary concessions: not simply that advertising is an important factor in our economy, or on occasion performs those public services for which *The Saturday Review* annually commends it, or supplies information, often tasteful and accurate, about products and services useful and necessary to civilized living, but that it is a means the American mind uses to extend its range of experience. One of the practical uses of poetry is that it does exactly this, and advertising is poetry of a special kind. Much criticism of advertising is grounded on a fear of all extensions of experience; it therefore takes its stand on narrowly and pessimistically defined "nature" and makes much of the extent to which the adman is a creator of artificial appetites. My assumptions here are that he is neither this powerful nor this sinister, that the extension of experience is not necessarily a bad thing and that the appetites the adman arouses are natural enough. The trouble is that the adman encourages the liberation of appetite from the restrictions of time, space and the complex limiting realities of the mortal scene.

You cannot, unfortunately, extend the range of human experience without increasing the burden of organization and communication. The fact is that the organizing myths mirrored in the school of advertising are grossly inadequate to organize effectively the extension of experience in which advertising has played an important role. Professor Wiener points out that "the more probable the message the less information it gives. Clichés, for example, are less illuminative than great poems." The disadvantage of the mythical messages of advertising is that they tend to be unilluminating, highly probable (i.e., highly predictable) clichés in which the illusion of humanly valuable organization is achieved only by omitting all information that threatens the comforting clarity of the clichés. And it cannot do this without training the public in the techniques necessary to wishful thinking in all areas of life.

Most people, of course, have some ability to protect themselves from the cliché-ridden poetry of advertising: which is only to say that they have a certain ability to

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protect themselves from the overrevaluations and wistful self-delusions their own emotions and appetites make them prone to. Few people react to advertising without some ironic reservations, just as few people get completely lost in their daydreams. Nevertheless, Americans are congenitally prone to the stereotypes of Utopian thinking, and so they are never entirely immune to the clichés of advertising. Nor are most of us entirely immune to its mythic solutions to some of the central issues of modern life. For the advertiser only does in a more technically accomplished way what we as individuals are already too inclined to do in an effort to maintain a comfortable view of ourselves and our environment.

It can be urged that the Utopian impulse that is both mirrored in and aggravated by advertising is inseparable from the whole American effort to realize a better world than men have ever known. Perhaps this is true, but the effort to realize this world is thwarted by the unrealistic vulgarization, the misevaluation and the mythic immoderation of the vision of this objective. And the danger of this Utopian vision lies not so much in the hyperbole with which it is dramatized, but in the values and definitions hyperbolized.

The tantalizing hyperbolic vision of material bliss that we experience in advertising increases the burden of interpretation for the already overburdened individual. For the clear import of much of the information that comes to him is violently at odds with his dream of an inevitable progress towards an earthly paradise. Like Hamlet, he can all too easily be demoralized by apparently irreconcilable views of the human condition—demoralized not by images of perfection but by irrelevant images of perfection.

Besides, our Utopian dreams have in them an implicit and dangerous disjunctive. The alternative to the dream of Utopia with its mythic triumph over time, space and change is visualized as a detachment from the rat-race of the world with a very different and interior triumph over time, space and change, as we see it in writers like Thoreau and Henry Miller. These opposed visions of the good life are dialectically joined together and determine each other in the extremities of their statements. For this reason it is hard for many Americans to really believe in their Utopian aspirations, much as they might wish to. The other vision haunts them like an uneasy conscience with the possibility of its ultimate truth: perhaps the bower of bliss our standard of living seems to be on the verge of realizing will after all prove to be a dull and prosaic reality.

Neither of these visions is humanistic or Christian. The tension between them—the American version of that of that conflict between this-worldliness and other-worldliness which Professor Arthur Lovejoy has traced to Plato—seems to be endemic with us. In proportion as it increases, the myths mirrored in advertising become more and more inadequate as organizers of information and more and more obstruct our efforts to achieve, not Utopia, but those minimum conditions of material well-being for all men, without which enclaves of Utopia either real or imagined are childish indulgences.

SEYMOUR SLESSINGER

Trading with the Communists

Our allies are unlikely to find the panacea they are hoping for

WHAT TURNS a blessing into a mixed blessing? Anyone interested in a graphic illustration of how it can occur should take note of the impact of recent economic problems within the Communist bloc on the cold-war strategy of the United States.

The blessing, it seems, materialized last fall, when rumors of serious agricultural shortages in Eastern Europe were confirmed by Moscow's purchase of large quantities of wheat from Canada and Australia. Coming in the wake of earlier reports of a Chinese Communist setback, such news was naturally gratifying to many of us in the United States. It provides fresh proof in support of our contention that state economic planning and operation on the Communist scale can be no effective substitute for individual initiative and free enterprise.

But then we decided to take advantage of the difficulties that had befallen the Communists, and the "mixing" commenced. Our decision to sell surplus wheat to the Russians and the Hungarians was taken by many of our allies and friends as a sign that they could drop practically all restraints on their trade relations with the Communist world. Despite our pleas to the contrary, a free-for-all style of competition for the additional markets has developed among them, the most startling features of which already include France's recognition

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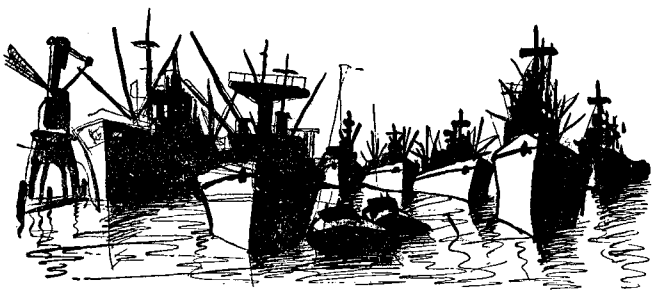
of Communist China, decisions by Britain, France, Sweden, Belgium, and Spain to initiate or expand trade with Cuba, and an upturn in Japan's economic ties to the Chinese mainland.

What these developments add up to is the most serious challenge to our leadership on the issue of East-West trade since 1948. At that time, acting on a conviction that no nation should furnish a potential aggressor with goods that can directly and materially aid his war industry and military build-up, we insisted upon a restrictive policy. The question now is: What can we do to cope with this problem without destroying the very foundation upon which the Western alliance system is based?

Of the possibilities, two are most obvious—which almost automatically renders them suspect. One is to try to force our allies back into line by means of sanctions. We could employ the Mutual Defense Assistance Control Act of 1951 (the "Battle Act"), which provides for the termination of United States military, economic, and financial assistance to any country that "knowingly permits" the shipment of "strategic materials" to Communist-bloc countries. A second is to abandon the present policy as impractical and permit American exporters to join in the seemingly uninhibited romp around the "maypole" of East-West trade. But while arguments are available to support both of these "solutions," this observer is inclined to believe that they are outnumbered by the arguments against.

AT THE HEART of the advocacy of an outright retributive policy is the conviction that everything possible, short of breaking diplomatic relations, should be done to prevent our allies from helping the Communist countries solve the very problems that we have been hoping to create since 1948. To do otherwise would amount to a complete abandonment of the West's "containment policy" at the very moment it is beginning to produce its most tangible benefits. Moreover, there is no logic in helping the Communists avert economic, and possibly political, disaster when, if the past is any criterion, it is almost certain that they will interpret our action as weakness and will sooner or later try to bite the hands that assist them.

Whatever the merit of this argument, it founders on the harsh reality that our allies, especially Britain and France, are of no mind to be coerced. They have never concealed their distaste for the "Battle Act," and goods that we classify as "strategic" have been moving to the Communist countries with increasing regularity. Recently, in addition to opening trade with Cuba despite our "blockade" of that country, the British have flatly rejected our request that economic credits to the Communist countries be limited to five years. The evidence of President de Gaulle's obstinacy has made an even more impressive picture. Unthinkable though it may have been a few years ago, it is not inconceivable today that the French leader would choose to leave NATO and SEATO rather than bow to overt pressure from our side. It might well be that the British are not too far behind him in this respect.



Though emotions have played a part in this particular international drama, it should be clear to us that our allies haven't acted purely, or even primarily, in a spirit of defiance. The depth of their attitude has been evident in the fact that their trade with the Communist bloc has always been annually higher than ours, and has been rising sharply in recent years. It has also been seen in their insistence right along that the restrictions on trade have become unrealistic in the light of changing world conditions. Fearful of their economic future, which has become beclouded by rising competition in the Western market and by population increases and labor-displacing automation at home, they have asked: Of what real value is it to refuse broader East-West economic relations, on the ground that trade serves Communism's global revolutionary aspirations, if it means undermining the free world's economies? Where will the front line of Western defense be located if developing economic problems add to the popularity of the already powerful Italian and French Communist parties and the Japanese left-wing? What will happen to the less-developed countries if Western Europe and Japan become the scenes of intense social and political strife?

Several of our allies and close friends have also been telling us about our lack of realism in coming to grips with the political problems that threaten the foundations of Communist unity. As they have seen it, we have failed to recognize that the open split between Moscow and Peking and the nationalistic rumblings among the East European satellites offers the best opportunity ever to strike a decisive blow in the Cold War without the risk of an armed conflict. According to their tactical prospectus, broader economic relations with the Russians and the East Europeans can provide the Chinese with fresh pigment for the "revisionist" portraits they paint of Khrushchev and his supporters. At the same time, trade with the Chinese can give them enough of an economic base to carry on their anti-Soviet campaign with impunity and also give the Russians fresh material for their retorts. This, it has been said, is certainly worth the effort, especially when continued trade restrictions

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might well afford hard-line Communists the best argument for overcoming the present state of disunity.

IN THE LIGHT of the evidence, it is clear that the West Europeans and the Japanese (to which list the Canadians might be added) are convinced that economic need and political opportunity far outweigh whatever reasons we have for insisting upon adherence to a fifteen-year-old policy of trade restrictions. Apparently there are also some members of the American community who are beginning to wonder out loud if they might not be correct. But does this mean that we should follow suit? The opinion here is no; that is, at least not yet.

It is useful at this time to recall the old adage, "all that glitters is not gold," and there are several reasons for it. One is the total record of relations with the Communist countries, which, unfortunately, presents a none-too-hopeful picture. Lest we forget, the only time real cooperation with Soviet Russia was achieved occurred during the Second World War, and it is hardly necessary to point out that it was Hitler's surprise attack more than anything else that made Moscow our ally.

A second, more specific, reason is that Nikita Khrushchev has yet to demonstrate convincingly that his espousal of peaceful coexistence, his relaxation of some controls at home and his dispute with the Chinese Communists denote a fundamental change in Soviet policy. What about his brutal intervention in Hungary, his approval of the Berlin wall, his unsuccessful attempt to erect missile bases in Cuba, and his repeated attempts to subvert governments of the less-developed countries? Such events as these make it difficult to believe that the present Soviet policy is not cut from an all-too-familiar cloth, one that has been woven and rewoven many times with threads of duplicity. Before giving Khrushchev the benefit of any doubt, it is useful to bear in mind that Lenin and Stalin both espoused peaceful coexistence when it suited their purpose, also making a point of "relaxing" controls at home, and very easily found their way back to the path of overt revolutionism.

Thirdly, though the Communist leaders have honored economic agreements many times in the past, they have also made it clear that they can be highly selective when it comes to observing the customary rules of international economic intercourse. So far, for example, they haven't recognized arbitration as a method of settling economic disputes, nor have they consented to becoming a party to international conventions governing patents and copyrights. As the record will attest, they are not above committing economic piracy, of buying one machine to use as a prototype in their own factories. Furthermore, considering the numerous occasions on which they have "reinterpreted" political agreements to suit themselves, assurance that they will honor every future obligation undertaken cannot be said to exist on a high level. Though we in the West can make a distinction between political and economic activity, the revolutionary Marxist makes no allowance for a purely economic act.

THE DEFINITE proof, then, of good faith is still the Communist responsibility. Otherwise the Western trader exposes himself to possible, if not probable, double-dealing. What will happen when trade is actually expanded, especially if it is based on long-term credits extended by the West? What reason is there to believe that the Communists will meet their obligations, that they will not try to turn the trade ties ultimately into a club for meting out "punishment" for alleged colonialism, imperialism, or war-mongering, to name only a few possible pretexts? Will they attempt to force Western exporters into disruptive and destructive competition? Will they continue to "dump" large quantities of goods on the world market in order to undersell the Western producer? Will they continue to use their trade in order to undermine our relations with the less-developed countries? Reasonable prudence requires that satisfactory answers to most, if not all, of these questions be obtained before the Western commitment to broader East-West trade is made unanimous.

Since it is too risky to apply extreme pressure against our allies or to join their quest for new markets in the Communist countries, what alternative remains? For the time being, it is probably best to avoid recriminations and to await some of the ramifications of the events to date. In a sense, these events can be viewed as a useful exercise in testing the temper of the times. The chances are that it won't be too long before we have an opportunity to tell whether the opinions of our allies can be substantiated. It should be of particular interest to see how President de Gaulle fares in his encounter with the Chinese Communists, who, judging by their relations with the Russians, seem to have no more respect for immovable objects than they do for the movable variety.

There is an obvious danger in trying to predict the future, especially under circumstances as fluid as those at the present time. However, there is good reason to expect that our allies will not find the panacea they hope for through broader trade with the Communist bloc. Right now the main appeal centers in the Communists' needs and in their ability to pay either in hard cash or with resources useful to the West. But what will happen when the ability or willingness to pay in these forms begins to lag behind? Are our allies prepared to underwrite the economic development of the whole Communist bloc? I think not. Are they ready to concede to likely demands that East-West trade be balanced by Western importations of Soviet and East European finished goods? Except on a very limited

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scale, I doubt this also. These, of course, are problems quite apart from plain old-fashioned Communist duplicity that, as noted already, is not beyond the realm of possibility.

All things considered, it would be useful for American policy-makers to be thinking about the contingencies that might have to be met. If the evidence in the near future indicates the type of benefits envisioned by our allies, we should be prepared to join them. However, if it happens that the Communists do attempt to make political capital out of the Western willingness to bargain in good faith, we should be ready to cope with that problem as well. Most of all, it is important that we do not let ourselves be caught off guard by developments that might be foreseen and acted upon before they become truly problematic.

IRVING HALPERIN

Postscript to Death

"Why are you alive when the others are not?"

"MY ENTIRE work is based on the difficulty of killing, or of committing suicide," said Elie Wiesel last year in an interview with a reporter from *L'Express*. Wiesel, whose writing has been praised by such distinguished critics as Alfred Kazin and François Mauriac, was in Paris to receive the Prix Rivarol. He was referring to the fact that each of the narrators in his novels, *Night, Dawn* and *The Accident,* having physically survived the concentration camps, seek, in Wiesel's words, "a postscript to death." They cannot forget the camps, their families and friends who were exterminated, and they cannot escape feeling shame and interrogation by the dead. For them the obsessive question is—"Why are *you* alive when the others are not?" They seem to hold themselves in contempt for not having voluntarily chosen to share the tragic fate of the Jewish people in the gas chambers. And it is not to forget the past, but rather to exorcise it; they sense that exorcism must first take place before they can bury the dead.

Hence in *Dawn,* the narrator Elisha, a member of the Jewish resistance movement in Palestine, a youth who has never before killed, executes a soldier of the English occupation forces—but this "act of protest" against the enemy fails to exorcise the past. And in *The Accident,* the main character, Eliezer, attempts suicide in the streets of Manhattan by doing nothing to avoid being struck down by a taxicab. But if he finds it difficult to live, he finds it no less difficult to die; despite severe injuries he survives. In the hospital he hovers in a twilight zone between despair and madness. Unable to exorcise the past, Eliezer, along with the survivor-narrators of *Night* and *Dawn,* is, in the profoundest sense, another of Eichmann's victims.

The background of these characters is similar to that of Wiesel's. During the last war, in his fifteenth year, he and his family were deported from their home in Transylvania to a concentration camp, where his mother, father and one of his sisters died. After liberation he refused to return to Hungary and was sent with other children from the concentration camps to France. Since 1956 he has been in New York, working as a journalist and writing fiction in a self-imposed atmosphere of, to cite the language of his *L'Express* interview, "silence and solitude." Like his narrators who view themselves as messengers returned from the dead with an urgent report for the living, Wiesel apparently believes that one of his essential purposes as a writer is to keep alive the horrors of the concentration camp past in a world where the road from Auschwitz led to Hiroshima and may well lead to a nuclear holocaust. At least this is the sense I make of a fable that he related to the *L'Express* reporter:

"I'd like to tell you a little Hasidic fable that contains all my obsessions—cries, madness, etc.

"There was once a very wise king who was warned strangely in a dream: the next harvest in his land would be cursed and whoever would eat of it would go mad. The king then called his most faithful counsellor and said, 'I will put provisions into your house so that you will be able to avoid the common fate. Thus, when we are all mad, you can go through the kingdom, and in all the streets of the cities, in the fields before the cottages, you will cry constantly, "My brothers, remember that you are mad."' "

In the first novel, *Night,* there is at the outset a momentary semblance of light. Eliezer, the narrator, recalls his boyhood and the pleasure he had from sitting at the feet of his religious teacher, Moché, the pious beadle of a Hasidic synagogue in the little Transylvanian town of Sighet. The beadle for him was the very presence of

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God. Instructed in the mysteries of the Zohar by his teacher, he became so intense a believer that he waited only for Moché "to draw me with him into eternity, into that time where question and answer would become one."

But it was hardly a beatific eternity in which Eliezer shortly found himself. For in the spring of 1944, having invaded Transylvania, the Germans arrested the leaders of the Jewish community of Sighet; two ghettos were set up and the deportation to "work camps and factories" began. At first, these happenings had for Eliezer an unreal quality, as though the processions of Jews with packs on their backs, moving toward the railroad station, were going on a holiday. And even when he arrived at Birkenau and first saw flames from the chimney and smelled burning flesh, he could not believe in the reality of genocide. Why would the God of Moché let such a thing happen? Why would He desert his people? But soon witnessing the mass burning of children, he cries out:

"Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times curses and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little flames of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

"Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.

"Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul. . . . Never shall I forget those things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God himself. Never."

The death of God in Eliezer is followed by self-contempt. He admits to himself that he and other prisoners stood by "cringing like beaten dogs" while Jews were being murdered. He especially despises himself for not having lifted a hand when his elderly father was struck by a Kapo. Then he had looked on, thinking, "Yesterday I should have sunk my nails into the criminal's flesh. Have I changed so much, then? So quickly?" And on the day of liberation his sense of outrage and shame is further compounded when he observes that the first thoughts of his fellow prisoners is of bread but "of revenge not a sign." So it is that on the final page of *Night*, Eliezer is horrified by what he sees in a mirror: He, too, and not only the dead, is a victim of the camps. Seared by immense suffering and shame, the face in the mirror seems to be seeking a "postscript to death."

Dawn begins at the place where *Night* ends—the narrator, Elisha, is about to attempt exorcising the past through an act of murder. Briefly, the novel is concerned with the midnight hours spent by Elisha, 18, a member of the resistance movement in Palestine. He has been ordered to shoot a captured British officer, John Dawson, in reprisal for the execution of a Jewish prisoner by the enemy. Whereas the dominant setting of *Night* was a concentration camp, here most of the story takes place in a cellar, as though in keeping with the underground activities of the resistance movement. The focus is on Elisha's agonizing conflict as he, a survivor of the inferno at Auschwitz, confronts the difficulty of murdering a human being.

A large part of his conflict stems from his apprehension that the execution will violate the memory of his parents, who themselves were murdered in the camps. Moreover, his parents had been committed to the traditional view of pious Jews that an act of violence against one's oppressors is unthinkable, undignified. They had believed that it was the messianic mission of Jews "to represent the trembling of history rather than the wind which made it tremble." They honored the centuries-old Judaic principle that the Torah bids one to remember Amolek, not to hate it. Therefore, they who had starved in the camps, would have wanted him to be merciful to the doomed English officer, to at least give him an adequate last meal. That is why, on remembering his parents and the concentration camps dead, Elisha feels himself being watched, judged, by a "thousand eyes."

While waiting through this long night, Elisha especially feels the presence of his boyhood friend, Yerachmiel, with whom he had zealously studied the Cabala, and at first he fears he is being judged by the other. But then he hears the voice of his old friend saying that neither he nor the other dead of the camps can judge him. Rather, Yerachmiel says, "Your silence is your judge." In other words, the presence of the silent dead is continually in Elisha. It is to them alone that he confesses his shame for having survived the camps.

At the poles from the tradition of submissive martyrdom which was honored by Elisha's parents and his religious teachers is the point of view taken by his comrades in the resistance movement. And that extreme difference is forcefully expressed by a leader of the Terrorists called Gad, a suggestion that he symbolizes the new-style Israeli, who wishes to be the "wind of history" rather than to "tremble" before it. Gad exhorts Elisha to renounce his obsession with the concentration camp past ("Don't torture yourself in the night"). Instead, Gad would have Elisha live for the future of a free Israel and of self-respecting Jews ("We shall kill in order that once more we may be men"). The Terrorist leader would resist the English, make them "tremble."

Now—intellectually, at least—Elisha is in accord with the rationale of Gad's prescriptions, especially about the desirability of hating the enemy. Not to hate the latter is to lessen crucially the possibilities for a "new dawn" in Palestine.

"Without hate everything that my comrades and I are doing would be done in vain. Without hate we would not hope to obtain victory. Why do I try to hate you,

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John Dawson? Because my people have never known how to hate. Their tragedy, throughout the centuries, has stemmed from their inability to hate those who have humiliated and from time to time exterminated them. Now our only chance lies in hating you, learning the necessity and the art of hate. Otherwise . . . our future will only be an extension of the past, and the Messiah will wait indefinitely for his deliverance."

This is what he thinks but what he *feels* is entirely another matter. For on coming in the presence of John Dawson, Elisha is moved to pity. Unable to hate the doomed man, he hates only himself.

Elisha's execution of the Englishman does not succeed in exorcising the past. "I've killed Elisha," he thinks, hopefully, as Dawson sinks to the ground. But immediately after the execution he looks at his reflection in a window and is horrified to find there what in the ending of *Night* Eliezer also saw—the face of one in hell. Thus for Elisha "night" has not given way to the dawn of Gad's dream. Rather the dawn comes up like "greyish light the color of stagnant water." At the end there is neither night nor dawn but the greyness, the ambiguity, of Elisha's torment. Murder has not brought him peace. He is still plagued by the necessity of exorcising the past.

THIS IS also what the major character of *The Accident*, Eliezer, another survivor of the camps and now a journalist in New York, attempts to achieve—through suicide. He was struck by a taxi while crossing a Manhattan street and suffers a brain concussion, hemorrhage and multiple fractures. Lying in a hospital room—and it is significant that the main settings of the three novels are confined enclosures, as though these places were emblematic of the inner inferno in which the three narrators dwell—Eliezer admits to himself that his was not an accident; he had wanted it to happen.

Nor has the accident resulted in a lessening of his guilt over having survived the camps. He sees himself as a Lazarus risen from the dead, a "poisoned messenger" who is fated to come before others as a disfigured reminder of the Catastrophe. He rejects the efforts of Kathleen, a young American with whom he has been having an affair and who now is at his bedside in the hospital, to prod him into desiring recuperation. Before and after the accident he deliberately, perversely, rejects her love, as though to convince her that humanity is rotten to the core. Similarly, he rejects the brotherly support of his doctor, who wants his patient to seek recuperation. Thus Eliezer seeks not life but rather "a postscript to death."

While lying on the hospital bed he keeps going back obsessively to some moments of his boyhood. One of his memories is that of his grandmother, a deeply pious woman who loved and inspired him with her religious beliefs. But she, too, like the rest of his family, was murdered in the camps and now is only an image in a "night of many faces," a ghost come to admonish him because of his abandoned faith. Another memory is that of his old teacher, Kalman the Cabalist, who taught him that God's existence is sacredly bound up with Man's. And he too admonishes Eliezer not to proclaim blasphemously that God is dead. And yet, Kalman, like his grandmother, went up the chimneys also. Finally, Eliezer recalls his mother, Sarah, who told him not to forget the ethical and religious teachings of his people or he would be damned for eternity. The point warrants reiteration: Eliezer, like the narrators of *Night* and *Dawn*, needs to keep returning through recall to his roots in the past, as though to find some meaning, some sort of redefinition and reintegration of values, which can provide him with a moral sanction for desiring a rebirth.

These remembrances may be seen as dialectical steps in preparing him for the appearance of his artist-friend, Guyla. The latter, a robust giant of a man, characteristically meets life as though to force it to give up some sort of existential meaning. He, too, like Kathleen and the doctor, tries to prod his friend into fighting for recovery. The artist tells the other that instead of killing hope in himself, instead of making others around him feel guilty and afraid, he should bury the dead, focus on the living, and strive to alleviate suffering ("It is man's duty to make it cease, not to increase it. One hour of suffering less is already a victory over fate.")

One day Guyla strategically brings to the hospital room a finished portrait of Eliezer: it is the study of a man who is in hell. Then the artist suddenly burns the portrait before his friend's eyes, as though to encourage, ritualistically, the latter to exorcise the old self and to create himself anew ("Man must keep moving, searching, weighing, holding out his hands, offering himself, inventing himself"). In sum, Guyla offers Eliezer a new "dawn"; but whereas Gad in *Dawn* offered Elisha one built on nation and militancy, this one is to be based on a life of creative self-improvisation.

Guyla's exhortation gets through to Eliezer. There is the suggestion that he is ready to give the other's advice an earnest trial. But then the book ends abruptly on a note of ambiguity. Eliezer continues to look too intensely at his portrait, at the face of one who has come back from the dead; and in consequence Guyla angrily burns the canvas, departs, leaving his friend with the ashes. The suggestion here is that the ashes symbolize the interrogation of the camps, the dead, the survivors, that undoubtedly will go on for Eliezer—an interrogation continuing until either he is somehow resurrected or successful in finding a "postscript to death." Meanwhile, he will probably dangle in a shadowy nether world, the silent world of a man who is strangling, suffocating.

So it is—to bear out Wiesel's statement about the recurring theme in his work—that the third novel ends on the same chord of the first—the anguish of a survivor who is unable to exorcise the past or to live with lucidity and grace in the present.

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Cuba and the Church

TO THE EDITORS: Leslie Dewart's book *Christianity and Revolution* [excerpts, Oct. 11] is an accusation against the United States and the Cuban Catholic Church and an attempt to justify collaboration with Communism. The author seeks also to justify Castro's metamorphosis into Marxism-Leninism. Of course, Mr. Dewart is entitled to write in favor of Castro, whom he admires. What is highly regrettable and wholly objectionable, from the moral and the academic point of view, is that he resorts to fallacious arguments and even to distortions and misrepresentations.

Mr. Dewart has no hesitation in calling the Cuban Catholic Church medieval, inflexible, withdrawn. These incriminations are gratuitous and baseless. The Cuban clergy did not have any sympathy for the medieval Spanish ideal of Church-State integration of which Mr. Dewart speaks; they knew very well by hard experience what such a union and integration of Church and State really means in practice: the Church is usually more oppressed than protected. Such was the case in Cuba under the Spanish colonial administration.

One wonders if Mr. Dewart knows anything about the persecution, bloodless but quite ruthless and impious, suffered by the Church in Cuba during the last century: convents and novitiates were closed; religious communities were suppressed and their properties confiscated by royal decrees; the Catholic University of Havana as well as three Church hospitals were secularized; and the Church unjustly harassed and subdued. Because of these and other similar experiences, the clergy in Cuba have never had any enthusiasm at all for the union and integration of the Church and the State.

As a matter of fact, since Independence in 1898, the wall of separation between Church and State has been higher and wider in Cuba than in the United States. The concept of laicism which prevailed in Cuba was more like the French variety of the eighteenth century than the American. All religion was eliminated from public schools, State institutions and organizations. In Cuba we did not have military chaplains; we did not have released time in public schools for religious instruction; we did not have tax exemption for properties belonging to religious and charitable institutions and organizations. Even religious marriages were deprived of legal effect and a civil ceremony was mandatory. But the Cuban clergy did not waste time or energy opposing and protesting such intolerant secularism. They hoped that eventually the bias and prejudices against religion could be overcome and the Church's legitimate rights would be recognized in a system of Church-State separation as practiced in the United States.

The historic fact is that the Cuban clergy welcomed the establishment of the Republic with a very realistic, open-minded and liberal attitude. To facilitate this adaptation to the Republican era, the Holy See moved fast by accepting in the same year 1898 the resignation of the Spanish Bishops of Santiago and Havana, and appointing native priests as their successors.

IT MUST be emphasized that since the establishment of the Republic, the Cuban Church's government has not been Spanish but Cuban. It is not true, as stated by Mr. Dewart that today three out of nine Cuban bishops are Spanish. Mr. Dewart assumes that Msgr. Jose M. Dominguez, appointed Bishop of Matanzas in 1960, is a Spaniard. He is a Cuban, born in Havana. Concerning the two others, namely Bishop Perez-Serantes and Bishop Riu, it should be noted that both came to Cuba while still boys, attended Cuban seminaries and were ordained for Cuban dioceses. By education, association, feelings and choice they are Cubans. Still more remarkable is the fact that Mr. Dewart categorically affirms that the Papal nuncio to Cuba, Msgr. Centoz, is a Spaniard. If Mr. Dewart were to check the *Annuario Pontificio* he would easily verify that Archbishop Luigi Centoz is an Italian.

Mr. Dewart emphatically states that "The wars of Independence saw the Church lined up solidly and militantly, though not very effectively, against the Cuban patriots." Mr. Dewart should have made a clear distinction between the native and the Spanish clergy in Cuba. What really happened was that the native Cuban clergy, Catholics and freemasons supported the cause of independence, while the Spanish priests and Catholics, as well as the Spanish freemasons were, generally speaking, against independence. Precisely because the native Cuban priests favored Cuba's independence and were opposed to the Spanish colonial despotism, they were discriminated against and persecuted by the colonial authorities.

Apparently Mr. Dewart has very superficial and faulty information not only about the past but also about the present. Of more recent events, Mr. Dewart writes: "In deference to the hierarchy the (Castro) government agreed to allow, for the first time in republican Cuba's history, religious instruction in public schools." This statement is absolutely false. Castro

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never agreed to allow religious instruction in public schools.

Mr. Dewart resorts to slanderous imputations in order to discredit the Cuban Church. He says that "Clerical concubinage, which is probably not as frequent as elsewhere in Latin America, is frowned upon by Catholics, but is one of the few ways in which Cuban priests can hope to earn a modicum of respect from other Cuban men." This is absolutely untrue and malicious. Even Castro has not dared charge this felony against the Cuban clergy. But Mr. Dewart has no scruples in making this defamatory statement for the consumption of American and Canadian public opinion.

The Cuban clergy should be praised, not only for its moral integrity but also for its pastoral dedication and its success in building up Cuban Catholicism. The Church in Cuba did not stand still nor ever thought of itself as "impotent" or as "having been rejected by the world" as Mr. Dewart quite incorrectly states. By 1958, only sixty years after the Independence, Cuban Catholicism was one of the most dynamic and energetic of Latin America. Proof of the renascence and vigor of the Cuban Catholicism were the Catholic Action Movement which enrolled some 35,000 members, and the Catholic educational system with two universities and 342 schools attended by some 85,000 students.

Mr. Dewart's conception of the Cuban Catholic Church is "isolated" and "withdrawn from the world-sullying contact" is also inaccurate. Actually, during the Batista regime thousands of Catholics, many priests and even some Bishops took issue with Cuba's political crisis and supported Castro's struggle. Moreover, it is a fact very well known in Cuba that the Church welcomed the triumph of the Cuban revolution and was very sympathetic toward its social program.

One last point. Mr. Dewart states that because of its anti-Communism "the Cuban Church was one of the parties responsible for having helped bring Communism to Cuba—rather more so, perhaps, than any other single cause." This thesis is preposterous. It is discredited even by Castro himself, who admitted, in his speech of December 1, 1961, that he was a Marxist-Leninist long before coming to power. In another speech three weeks later he said: "What have we done? Well, we understand this reality: We have acted in a Marxist-Leninist manner . . . Of course, if we stopped at the Pico Turquino (Sierra Maestra) when we were weak and said 'We are Marxist-Leninist,' possibly we would not have been able to descend from the Pico Turquino to the plane. Thus, we called it something else, we did not broach this subject, we raised other questions that the people understood perfectly."

Castro promised the re-establishment of the 1940 Constitution, freedom of speech, free elections and a democratic government to carry on social reforms, while right along he had in mind to impose on the Cuban people Communist tyranny. It certainly could not be expected that once Castro's shameful deception and wicked conspiracy was detected and duly established, the Cuban Church (Bishops, priests and laity alike), would not try to oppose and avert it. To do otherwise would be tantamount to betraying the Christian faith and the Cuban people. BRAULIO MORAN

Braulio Moran is the pseudonym of a Cuban priest, now serving in the United States.

Reply

Toronto, Ontario

TO THE EDITORS: Obviously, any characterization of the Cuban Church over the last sixty years must be complex and must include a number of subjective judgments. The case I make in my book is neither simple nor gratuitous, and many of the facts adduced by Fr. X I have used myself to qualify my judgments. But in the end I do reach certain conclusions which nothing that Fr. X has said would lead me to modify. The suggestion that since republican times the Cuban Church generally considered the American system of Church-State relations to have been doctrinally admissible and compatible with the Christian faith cannot be taken seriously. Fr. X apparently does not realize that even in the U.S. itself this view had not been widely accepted until very recently.

My source for believing that Msgr. Domínguez is a Spaniard was a direct statement to the point made in Cuba during a TV interview by Fr. Guillermo Sardiñas; it was quoted in *Bohemia,* May 21, 1961. Fr. X's denial is the first I've heard. I cannot decide which of these two Cuban priests is correct. The question of the Spanish complexion of the Cuban Church does not, in any event, rest upon this.

I have verified that Msgr. Centoz is, indeed, an Italian, and I am grateful to Fr. X for having pointed out this error of fact. But more's the pity that the fact is so. In *Christianity and Revolution* I explained how strongly Msgr. Centoz, the Nuncio, had advocated behind the scenes coexistence with the revolution. I alluded to his nationality for the explicit purpose of showing "how dangerous simplified generalizations" about national groups could be. Now I am left without a single instance of a Spanish prelate in Cuba who refuses to be stamped by the unconditional fear and hatred of Communism.

On the matter of religious instruction Fr. X should have quoted me in full pertinent part. What I actually said was that the government "agreed to allow . . . religious instruction in public schools, provided the same facilities be made available to all creeds and

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provided the interested denominations supply the teachers." I also explained that in the absence of Church resources this was in practice "meaningless," and that the concession was but a gesture on the government's part. The hierarchy had wanted the government to *provide* religious instructions at public expense and not merely *permit* it, on the grounds that Cuba was a Catholic country. As I made clear, this request was *disallowed*. In short, Fr. X equivocates. To the best of my knowledge the facts are as I stated them.

Fr. X's indignation about my presumed slander of the Cuban clergy's sexual morality is a little artificial. The context he omitted shows I made no such charge and that my statement described a fact, namely a typical Cuban attitude towards the clergy. What I actually wrote was "The feeling remains in Cuba to this day that organized religion is a matter for women and young children. The same Cuban who would as likely as not wear a medal around his neck . . . would not wish to be seen speaking civilly to a priest or entering a Church on Sunday, so heavily taxed might he be with the charge of effeminacy and unvirility.

"The depth of this feeling can perhaps best be gauged from the fact that clerical concubinage (which is probably not as frequent as elsewhere in Latin America) is frowned upon by Catholics, but is one of the few ways in which Cuban priests can hope to earn a modicum of respect from other Cuban men." Anyone familiar with Cuban *mores* knows that if Catholic laymen are taunted on account of their faith, the clergy suffer even more on account of their vows, for not only the practice of religion, but very particularly continence and chastity have a decidedly negative value among Cuban men. My statement clearly referred to a sociological fact which I consider very well established. I'm afraid it stands.

To speak plainly, Fr. X has tried to capitalize on the implication contained in my statement, namely, that clerical concubinage in Cuba is not altogether unknown. This implication is correct, and I don't suppose Fr. X would care to argue otherwise. When a certain former pastor of the town of Holguín (every Cuban Catholic in exile will know whom I mean) declared himself in favor of the revolution and it was feared that the faithful might heed his public pronouncements on political matters, Cuban Catholics discredited him with charges about his personal life and, in particular, with the accusation of concubinage. I have no idea, of course, whether the charge was true or not. Perhaps Fr. X has an opinion on the matter. On the other hand, Fr. X would have been correct to remark that concubinage, which was somewhat of a problem during colonial times, has steadily decreased in the twentieth century and is rare enough today. He also would have been correct to observe that concurrent with a diminution in the frequency of such irregularities, their form has exhibited a steady trend away from stable alliances (concubinage in the strict sense) to more temporary and even casual contacts. These points, however, do not take away the truth of what I wrote.

I don't believe an attentive reader of my book could doubt for a moment my agreement with Fr. X that in general the Cuban clergy "should be praised not only for its moral integrity but also for its pastoral dedication . . ." The picture I drew in *Christianity and Revolution* was precisely that—except that I did not state it baldly, but illustrated it in some detail. Very specially, my account of Catholic lay, clerical and hierarchical support for the revolution during the Batista days remains, I believe, the most complete available in English to date. It is not sparing in its admiration for the Cuban Church in this respect. I cannot take kindly to the suggestion that I ignored, if not denied, the truth of the matter.

I do not claim, of course, perfect accuracy, perfect knowledge of the facts, perfect impartiality towards all interests, or perfect fairness towards all sides. Nor do I pretend that my effort to be objective means that my study of the revolution and the Church should remain inconclusive. But the suggestion that the case I make for my conclusions is as one-sided and unfair as has been claimed I can only excuse on the grounds of Cuban volatility, or other national passion, as the case may be. In the twilight of hysteria any attempt at reasonableness is bound to gather against itself all the different shades of unreason. I note with little amusement that from the Cuban revolution's point of view what would count against my book and would forbid its publication in Cuba is not that I "admire" Castro sufficiently to say that he has certain virtues, but that nevertheless I'm sufficiently "prejudiced" to single him out as the *only* person in *Christianity and Revolution* about whom I make personally derogatory remarks and the *only* one whose personal character I assail.

There is not a single person in my book, however, not even Castro, in regard to whom I do not assume a sincere motivation, a basic good faith, and a strict conscientiousness. I call no one "malicious," nor remotely imply anything of the sort, not even about those whom in my opinion were mistaken or decided wrongly. This is explicitly stated, indeed, in relation to anti-revolutionary Catholics, lay and clerical. It is very particularly affirmed of the Cuban hierarchy, whom I tried to depict as tragic figures, compelled by their consciences to teach and command an opposition to the revolution that they would much rather not have had painfully to teach and command. In fact, the whole point of *Christianity and Revolution* is to draw an object lesson suggesting that contemporary Christianity should not meet the problems of today's

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world without a genuine and thorough examination of conscience, not at all for the sake of detecting whatever *guilt*, if any, it may carry from the past, but essentially for the sake of ensuring that it is correctly *formed* towards the future.

The topic of Cuba, I thought, was particularly apt precisely because we all *feel* so strongly about it. I saw little value in proposing an abstract theory that would have gained some indifferent assent as quickly as it could have been forgotten. What I wanted to suggest was the possibility that some of our most ingrained and *cherished* ways of Christian thought and behavior are no longer true or adequate. Whoever approaches *Christianity and Revolution* unprepared to concede the *possibility* that for all its good will the collective conscience of the Cuban Church was *wrong*, can hardly fail to read it except in terms of accusation and attack, defense or justification, sympathy against aversion. To such a person, I admit, I have nothing to communicate.

Castro's supposed admission of December 1, 1961, (or of later dates) is a crucial instance of what I mean. The definitiveness with which the common assertion can be denied is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that this is a point which finds me in a rare agreement with AP, UPI and Theodore Draper. No one can possibly take the text and make it say that Castro admitted that he was a Marxist before coming to power —except, of course, by quoting out of context or by actually fabricated a quotation to that end, as *Time* magazine did.

I find it rather sad that so many Cuban Catholics continue to cling desperately to this belief, because it anchors their absolute confidence that further reflection is uncalled for, that any objection is *a priori* baseless, that any suggestion that their response to the Revolution was less than wise is malevolent of itself. Their faith in this delusion soothes in advance any possible diffidence. It reassures them that they were right, after all, and that their "martyrdom" was not in vain. It spreads a balm on the asperity of the thought that they, particularly the clergy, abandoned their posts for nothing better than the satisfaction of their need to protest, and that they *quit* Cuba when, as they now begin to wonder, perhaps they should have stayed. It absolves them, in short, from the need to face their own consciences and their own deeds. I am very sorry for the Cuban Church that this remains its predominant mood to date.

I take this rationalization, therefore, as the criterion whereby I shall discern the rebirth of the Cuban Church. On the day when Cuban Catholics shall genuinely ask of themselves, "*Did* we do wrong?," rather than find an alibi in dark conspiracies and a villain in anyone who disagrees with them, I shall conclude that the night of the Cuban intellect is over, and that a new dawn is about to break over this region of the Universal Church.

LESLIE DEWART

"The Mindszenty Tragedy"

Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS: I read Thomas Weyr's article on "The Mindszenty Tragedy" in your January 17 issue. As the author is known to me as a good and conscientious reporter, I was distressed by a flat statement he made which, I believe, should not be left unanswered.

The Cardinal's "biggest error" was, Mr. Weyr writes, his "open grab for power made during those few days he was free in 1956." Mindszenty, the author adds, "permitted his name to be mentioned as a future prime minister succeeding Imre Nagy."

This, the author will forgive me, is simply not true. Not even the Communists have accused Mindszenty of such a blunder.

I am at a loss to understand where Mr. Weyr got his information. He must have gotten it secondhand, as he himself was not in Hungary during those days.

The Cardinal made two public addresses during the three days he was free. A brief one on November 1, and a longer one broadcast on the evening of November 3, a few hours before the Soviet onslaught on Budapest. If Mr. Weyr, or anyone else, can discover in this speech any claim to power, then I obviously do not understand my own mother tongue. I advise him to read the speech: it is available in English translation. It is, I admit, pretty boring stuff.

Paul E. Zinner wrote about the second, more important Mindszenty speech in his *Revolution in Hungary:* "On the whole, his address was moderate and correct, but no more than that. A dispassionate, neutral observer could hardly find serious fault with it."

I agree with Zinner. I also agree with his criticism: the speech, he said, "left a great many people dissatisfied." I may add briefly, that having known Mindszenty before his arrest, having covered his trial, having met him several times during those three days, and finally having met him in the Legation after November 4, I did not expect more from him.

One may censure the Cardinal for many things he did or did not, and I myself have criticized him in my writings. But the charge that he "grabbed for power" is, to put it mildly, without foundation.

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Though to defend Mindszenty on this important point was the sole reason of this letter, and while I want to respect Mr. Weyr's right to come to conclusions whether I agree with them or not, I cannot resist mentioning some admittedly trivial mistakes he made in his article. They only prove how difficult it is for a "foreigner" to write about a country he knows only superficially. Here are two examples:

1) Mr. Weyr says that Hungary's Prince Primate (e.g. the Archbishop of Esztergom) was "traditionally . . . the king's deputy, entitled in his absence to wear the Holy Crown." Every Hungarian schoolchild (even today) could tell the author that he is wrong. Though the Prince Primates were acknowledged as the "first bannerets of the realm"—a mediaeval title of little substance—they were never the king's deputies in Hungary's thousand-year-long history. The King's deputy was the "nador," or palatine.

As to wearing the crown, everyone familiar with the unique constitutional role of the Holy Crown must dismiss Mr. Weyr's statement. The kings of Hungary became kings only when crowned with St. Stephen's crown, and even they wore it only once, namely on that very day. Nobody else, palatine or Prince Primate, could wear the crown.

2) Sopron, the city in West Hungary Mr. Weyr has visited, was "once Austrian," he says. It never was. It is true, on the other hand, that this beautiful city, the unofficial capital of Burgenland, was inhabited mainly by German-speaking Hungarians, or Austrians, if Mr. Weyr prefers.

It is against my journalistic principles to comment on a colleague's writing. Yet I felt I had to defend the Cardinal, who obviously cannot defend himself.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam. ENDRE MARTON

Trenton, N.J.

TO THE EDITORS: No doubt there are many debatable historical suggestions in Thomas Weyr's melodramatic presentation of the Mindszenty situation [January 17], especially as to the entire culpability of the "relics" of the Church's past for the present situation. However, deserving much more serious consideration are the tactical merits of Mr. Weyr's suggestions for the relief of the Hungarian Church.

The tenor of this article seems to imply that Mindszenty's exile in the American legation is an embarrassment to both the Vatican and Washington, and that his early departure will greatly serve their ends. Now that the Kadar regime is becoming conciliatory enough to tolerate his safe departure, it is apparently only the obstinacy of the Cardinal himself that prevents it.

Naturally no prudent person would object to the Church's making some sort of arrangement with the regime if it would secure the life of the Church and enable it to fulfill its mission of teaching, ruling and sanctifying. In the past the Church has put up with tyrants worse than Kadar. But certain things must be realized before considering such. For example, it should be quite obvious that the real embarrassment from the Mindszenty situation falls not on the Church or on the United States, but on the Hungarian Government. Consequently, to be relieved of this great embarrassment the State should be expected to grant the Church significant concessions.

Yet in the contemplated accommodation Mr. Weyr describes, it seems that it is the State that would be compensated for relieving itself of an embarrassment. For instance, in return for the allowance of safe passage, "The government will operate from a stronger legal position . . . agreement would re-establish order [?] and end harassment." Also new priests could be trained, " . . . men unburdened with the legacy of the past; pragmatists able to deal with . . . the regime on terms naturally evolved and with an ease acquired through growing up under Communist rule."

Rather than secure the life of the Church, such a deal might cause damage more serious than open martyrdom—damage in the form of internal corruption. At present, even without the enhanced legal authority the new accommodation might give it, the State Office of Church Affairs is using all of its energies to exclude the most able and religiously faithful priests from important Church positions. If independence and loyalty to the Church's mission is now penalized, imagine the situation which could result when many new "Peace Priests" would be trained under a "fellow-travelling" Primate. At that point religion would surely be reduced to being a private fetish without any organic and social significance—unable to fulfill its teaching or ruling function.

If the Church, in her wisdom, does see fit to relieve the Hungarian Government of the embarrassment of Mindszenty, then she should insist on certain definite compensations. Examples might be freedom in internal Church appointments, the freedom of presently appointed bishops to exercise their jurisdiction, the filling by the Holy See of vacant episcopal offices, the removal of disabilities from persons receiving religious instruction, the freedom of the Church to give religious instruction in church buildings, and freedom for the Church to advance not just positive doctrinal instruction but ability to reply to anti-religious teachings.

In return for guarantees of this sort, Mindszenty would probably accept voluntary exile. Failure to insist on these conditions would do great harm to the Church, Mr. Weyr's suggestion that Cardinal König was disappointed with the position of the Hungarian Primate in their secret meeting to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Hungarian situation is completely different from the Polish situation, and one of the major differences is that in Poland the Church has received a great many concessions enabling it to fulfill its mission. With a

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diplomacy more subtle than that advocated by Mr. Weyr, such might be attained in Hungary.

JOHN P. MCCARTHY

Reply

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: I certainly did not mean to imply that Cardinal Mindszenty stumped Budapest streets in 1956 looking for support to take over the country. But during the revolutionary turmoil he did permit repeated mention of his name as a possible Prime Minister. Speculation at the time was intense and widespread, and has proved tenacious. (It is still considered fact in any discussion about Mindszenty held in Central Europe today. And it's worth emphasizing that while foreigners' knowledge of Hungary may be superficial, it is fresher than that of those who left in 1956). Nor can Mindszenty's key position in the fluid political situation of the revolution be dismissed by citing his speeches professing aloofness from politics. Public pronouncements hardly carried the same weight than they would have under more stable circumstances. My point was simply one of bad judgment and poor handling of a slippery situation; and I stressed that this was a retrospective assessment.

As for the crown, I think Mr. Marton misreads my intention. I was interested in the myth and the symbolism surrounding the crown, not in setting down the bald facts of its history. I was not, after all, suggesting that the Primate put the crown, which isn't in Hungary anyway, on his head. Myth and symbolism, as distinguished from fact, spawn strong emotions, and strong emotions are often the wellspring of thought and action. This was an article about Mindszenty's tragedy and I related the circumstances to the man, not vice versa. And, despite the abuse heaped on me by Hungarian emigres and their press, I was writing *for* the Cardinal, not against him.

Arguing about Sopron, I feel, would be pure chauvinism—on both sides.

The criticism of melodramatic presentation of the Mindszenty story expressed in the second letter I accept gladly. The essential drama of the man is too often overlooked in discussing his "case." For the Cardinal's life, after all, is the raw stuff from which Shakespeare and the Greeks shaped their plays.

Otherwise I feel the writer is simply wrong. Today Mindszenty is more of an embarrassment to the United States and the Vatican than to Hungary. In the last three years this has been confirmed many times over by Western diplomats in Budapest and Hungarian officials including Kadar. The Hungarians freely admit this was not always the case; that initially they were at a disadvantage and wanted a way out of the Mindszenty dilemma. But time corrodes and history refuses to stand still.

The Holy See is trying to take advantage of the change in the countries where the Church is weakest. Poland is not among them and therefore not a fair comparison. The Polish Church is strong and vibrant. It has first class leadership and a devout population. Cardinal Wyszinski operates from strength, that's why he can afford the more subtle diplomacy your correspondent suggests for Hungary. But the Hungarian Church does not operate from strength and therefore can't afford it. Bereft of effective leadership and seriously weakened by years of Communist blood-letting, it is in no position to drive a Polish bargain. Mindszenty's departure is not negotiable for that high a price. Moscow wants a detente with the Vatican, but on today's terms not yesterday's. Refusal to accept them can only lead to a further deterioration of the Church's position.

While acceptance does contain serious risks, these can be calculated in advance. The benefits, though admittedly limited, outweigh them in my opinion. Resurgence of the peace priest movement, incidentally, does not seem to me one of the risks. Peace priests belong to the fifties and were a crude weapon in the cold war. Moscow doesn't play the game that way anymore.

I suppose it's worth stressing in this forum that I don't believe a change in the Kremlin's methods and aims has turned the Communist leadership into a band of angels. Communism is an insidious danger. But it is a living danger and a changing one that must be constantly examined, studied and assessed. And the assessments must keep pace with the changes, not kept frozen by inflexible prejudice.

THOMAS WEYR

There Are Matters

that demand early sun

the gloss of all color
absorbed
in two roadside crows

the several hues of fall leaf
memorizing our hills

the unexpectedness of pockets
of poplar
each fresh leaf
ready to hold wind or light

or now, trunk and branch more naked now
summer's gone

more like what our living,
I may say death,

might better
be

HERBERT BURKE

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THE SCREEN

Tom and Hank

AT THE beginning of the fine movie version of "Becket," King Henry II comes to the tomb of St. Thomas in Canterbury Cathedral to pray and do penance. His first words are, "Well, Thomas Becket, are you satisfied?" At the film's finale, after Henry is scourged, he asks again, "Are you satisfied now, Thomas?" And in between these two moving scenes in this beautiful setting is a long flashback that tells the story of the friendship between Henry, the uncouth, pleasure-seeking king of England, and Thomas Becket, the king's cultured companion and guide in play hours and state hours.

It was a great friendship, although an unusual one in that the two men had little in common beyond their diversions, their drinking and their hunting. Henry loved and respected Thomas; and Thomas, who loved no one, was loyal to his king, tried to improve his mind and manners, and even sided with him in arguments with the Church after Henry made Thomas Chancellor of England. It was unavoidable, however, that as the boys grew older, they should follow separate roads—which is just what they did when Henry, foolishly and against Thomas' wishes, made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury.

The congenial friendship turned to bitterness—and even hatred on Henry's part—when Thomas, who had said to the King, "So long as Becket must improvise his honor from day to day he will serve you faithfully," now took his service to the honor of God seriously. Thomas now defended the Church against the tyrannical king and would give up none of the Church's prerogatives in matters of taxation or the jurisdiction of civil courts. Henry, hurt, feeling alone, frustrated and angry at his former friend, finally cried out in rage while carousing with his drunken barons, "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?" The barons, only too anxious to oblige, committed murder in the Cathedral. And Thomas Becket, already greatly changed from his luxury-wallowing youth, became a martyr and a saint.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about "Becket" is that Jean Anouilh's play has been made into such a good movie. Producer Hal Wallis and director Peter Glenville wisely dropped the stylized effects of the stage production and allowed the searching cameras to add realism to the affecting tale. The film was made in England in Panavision and Technicolor and the shots of the countryside are stunning. One is incredibly beautiful as it shows Henry and Thomas meeting on a cold, wintry day beside the Channel; it is their first meeting after a long, quarrelsome separation; they fail to renew their old warmth, and it becomes their last meeting; and the sad situation, the locale, the script, the actors, and indeed the horses they ride are all perfect in the stirring scene. And all the costumes and sets, reconstructing twelfth-century England, as well as a bit of France and the Vatican, are splendid. Most impressive of the handsome sets is Canterbury Cathedral—so well built it looks like the real thing.

It was also wise for Hal Wallis to get Edward Anhalt to write the screenplay which is a definite improvement on the Anouilh opus—as is the whole movie. Actually Anouilh did not write a historical play; his was rather the story of a friendship and conflict with a historical setting. Anouilh even made Becket a Saxon, when he really came from a good Norman family. The movie continues this fiction; and like the play it looks down its nose at Queen Eleanor, who, as historians know, was no ninny. But Anhalt's script has many beautiful lines, some of which originate with the movie and some go back to the play. The greatest advantage in the movie is the convincing portrait of Thomas Becket whose conversion and saintliness are actually caught by the realistic cameras—caught in a happy combination of script, sets, actors and cinematography that movies seldom achieve in films about saints.

Without any doubt much of the credit for the tremendous success of "Becket" should go to its first-rate cast and to Peter Glenville who directed them so effectively. Peter O'Toole is dashing, impetuous, surly, self-centered Henry to perfection. His every scene vibrates with vitality and vigor; and he has also caught well the sensitivity and hurt Henry feels when he is convinced that Thomas has deserted him. But as flashy and skillful as his portrait is, it is Richard Burton who gives a smooth and even more polished performance in the difficult role of Becket, the playboy who realizes "There's a gap in me where honor ought to be," and then changes when he swings to God's service. While the film cannot go into too great depth in Becket's characterization, it does convey at least some meaning of sainthood. Burton is excellent when he shows Becket at prayer: "Lord, are you sure you are not tempting me? It all seems far too easy." And he is equally stirring in defying his king, "The kingdom of God must be defended like any kingdom," and "My role is to defend my sheep—and they are my sheep." Burton's sincerity in this portrait is even more effective because of earlier, pleasure-loving scenes with Henry.

I have not seen many films with a cast like the one in "Becket" or one in which such fine diction is spoken throughout. Not all the names can be mentioned, but note particularly Martita Hunt as Henry's mother, Pamela Brown as Queen Eleanor, John Gielgud as Louis VII of France, Donald Wolfit as the Bishop of London, and Felix Aylmer as the Archbishop of Canterbury (preceding Becket). The film is abounding in assets—and interestingly enough, it never becomes arty. Perhaps that's why it's art. The art is there, but it's the

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story that counts. It's Becket saying, "I'm waiting for the honor of God and the honor of the king to become one." PHILIP T. HARTUNG

THE STAGE

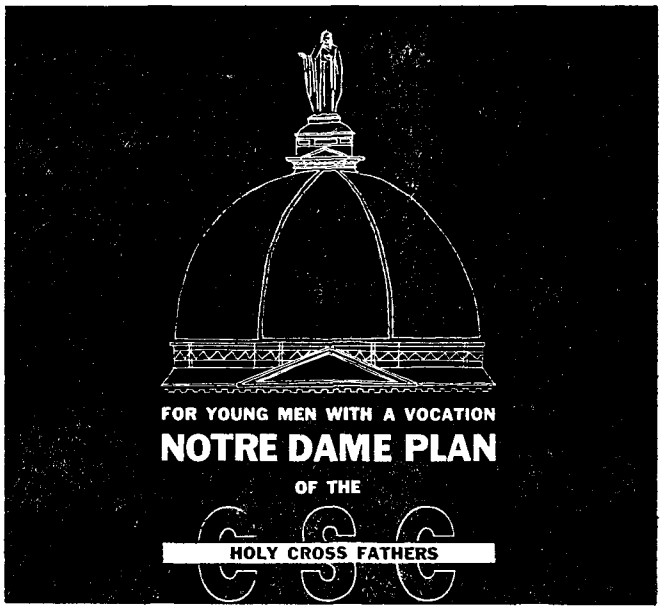
King Lahr

AMONG the few solid pleasures which our theater continues to afford is that of being in the presence from time to time of a performer like Zero Mostel or Bert Lahr. Lahr may lack Mostel's complexity and sorcerer's intelligence, but he shares with him a miraculous sense of timing, a mystery of movement and the great comic actor's openness to the absurd. But what is more decisive, the transfiguration that places Lahr and Mostel so far above "comedians" such as Bob Hope or Red Skelton, is their existence as cosmoses, total worlds in which every gesture coheres with every other, all speech composes a single and inevitable language and nothing takes place without a history and a future.

Chaplin was of course such a world; Buster Keaton and W. C. Fields were others. They, along with Lahr and Mostel, are the great clowns, who in our time have replaced the great tragedians as the primary sources of wisdom and replenishment. It need no longer be a matter of astonishment that one's sense of existence and courage to continue to wrestle with experience are better served by comic art when it reaches this plane than by a pseudo-tragedy empty of everything but ambition.

This is why it is possible to recommend "Foxy," which is an atrocious musical comedy whenever Lahr is not at the center of things, but no sort of problem when he is. That is to say, as soon as he comes on stage the mechanical and the superfluous (the pretext, really; why not simply "An Evening with Bert Lahr?") fall away—the sub-cretinal Klondike-based version of Jonson's "Volpone" (why not "Volpone" straight, with Bert Lahr?), the unbelievably dreary songs by Robert Emmett Dolan and Johnny Mercer, the choreography by Jack Cole that would have seemed derivative at the time of "Oklahoma."

When all that is mercifully dispensed with and Lahr stands forth in the circle of his own being, we can begin to live again and better. The eyes roll up towards heaven or the house-dick, the great moose-calls shake the furniture, the miracle of lust wedded to innocence and appetite to ineptness is once more effected. "Play me like a harp!" the temptress challenges him. An exquisitely fractional silence, a baring of the teeth, and then: "I can't, I got a sore pinky." You will not find any more cogent comment on our human predicament than that. *(At the Ziegfeld)* RICHARD GILMAN



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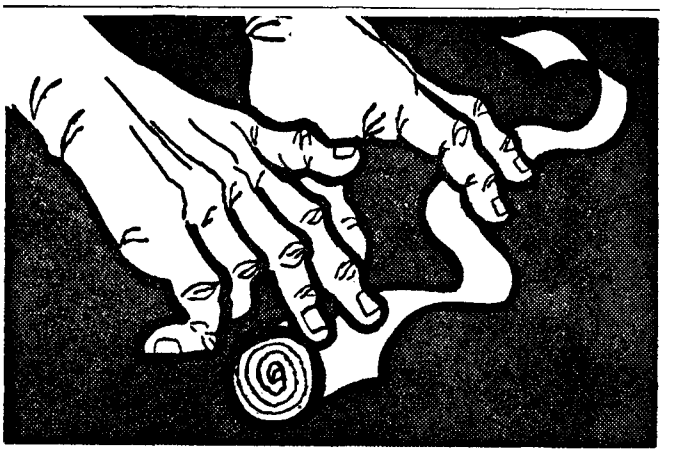

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Tension Between Individualism and Community in the Church

The Variety of Catholic Attitudes. By Theodore Westow. Herder & Herder. $3.50.

by H. A. Reinhold

THOSE of us who can remember the decade between the first Russian Revolution (1905) and the outbreak of World War I may also be able to recall the lively controversy that arose around historical and sociological questions in the Catholic Church. It dealt with a problem that has never completely been threshed out in lively conversation and in a way is still with us, or at least was with us under Pius XII. I mean the clash between "interiorized" subjective piety and the piety of the liturgy. It is therefore a great service of the author to have approached this problem in the mentality of existentialism and what we know today.

The author has divided his discussion into two parts. First the historical background and secondly its theory and practice. The center of the interest is man or rather the Christian and the Eucharist. Mr. Westow grants the first centuries of Christianity a *communal* spirit which represents the Eucharist as the banquet signifying and effecting oneness in the Church.

This course was self-evident and understood up till the high Middle Ages, when a new attitude developed. From everywhere individualism seeped into the Christian world through every crack and fissure. "For all practical purposes, the Catholic reality is pivoted on the Eucharist. If the Eucharist can become an individual, 'spiritual' affair with God, then there is no need, in fact, of a community; all mediatorship vanishes, but Christ stands for the community."

The hardest blow came from the Reformation churches. The author states plainly that Catholic theologians might have been wiser if they clung with greater tenacity to St. Thomas and the patristic traditions. Instead they got lost in accusations against the church of worldliness and abuses. The Reformation was pushed to an extreme by psychological revolution: "a revolt of the individual against the community, a horrifying tragedy within the human person."

All this was a Catholic attitude which had swung from communalism through four centuries to an attitude which instead put the human person on the throne. This attitude was not understood either in Rome or in Germany where the outbreak found a leader in Luther. It was the time when countless prayerbooks for the laity tried to channel the stream of piety pouring forth from the human heart. The Mass was completely separated from Communion. The fear of the laity's encroaching upon clerical privilege was so strong that people doubted whether it was permissible to translate the Canon.

The substitute was inane litanies which were composed for the laity until Clement VIII in 1601 cut off all litanies unauthorized by the Holy See. Benedict XIV consequently put all unapproved litanies on the Index. The author cites a litany of St. Augustine which addressed him as "'vessel' of divine knowledge, sun shining in God's temple, standard bearer of Jesus Christ, and charioteer of our army." The historian, Father Brémond, said: "Private devotion has cracked the liturgical shell."

With a safe instinct the author takes us on a hurried trip through the ambiguities of existentialism—an infuriating experience for any sane man. Soon we are back on familiar ground. The world had changed completely when the "interiorization" had taken place. The author asks himself: Is it possible that some subtle change has transformed the popular concept of sanctity?

The Christian strives after union with God. This is not a monopoly of the way of contemplation. Sure there is no doubt that contemplation has its place which is not simply to subvert and expel all liturgical prayer. Many pious people turn to a concept "of the spiritual life as a sucession of mental states which would ultimately flower forth in the final and lasting the beatific vision. . . . Is this not the obvious situation whenever we meet those unhappy contemplative failures that hover round the true mystic like the bloodless shades of the dead in Hades?"

The author asks: "Why is it that so very little of this type of mystical terminology ever penetrated into the mystical life of the Church at its summit, in the liturgy?" "If one takes into consideration the lack of certainty among outstanding theologians on the topic of contemplative life, what is one to think? . . . among theologians who make a special study of the contemplative life, there is no agreement on the extent of the Divine call to the state of mysticism."

Mr. Westow calls to memory a curious fact that some of the mystics, especially in Spain, had to be reminded that Christ was an historical person and that they achieved a peculiar celebrity by building systems which almost ignore the person and Incarnation of the Redeemer. They never give a second thought to man as by nature a communal being and that poverty and misery of all men have a relation to Christianity as long as the goods of this world are unfairly distributed. We can see how far man in his subjectivism has strayed from the fate of common man. In his exasperation the author asks the ironic question, "How does the individualist spiritualize the conditions around him?" He can do no more than suffer it.

This is by no means an easy book. It opens new vistas on problems long hidden in the Church. It is a book that will stir every reader and shatter all complacency. It is all the more timely as it faces modern man and his problems squarely. Is it vain to hope that Mr. Westow will lead us further in his studies now that he has written a book as stirring as this one? I would personally appreciate a less recondite discussion of existentialism.

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No liturgist has the freedom of disregarding this book with earnest and sobering questions. The attitudes analyzed and presented in their historical origin are true obstacles to the spread of understanding of common worship as the Church sees it: even great men have been misled and stubbornly used the common worship as a time for solipsistic meditation.

What the great mystics very often did with the celebration of the great Mystery is certainly no model even for the greatest of them. The psychocentric attitude has to give way to an ecclesial and communal celebration, especially as history has proved that there is room for both attitudes provided the subject is not stingy but generous.

German Everyman

Belmarch. By Christopher Davis. Viking. $3.95.

by Martin Tucker

MR. DAVIS' third novel is the kind of book one wishes were more successful. It has dignity, a stately rhythm, and an obvious integrity. While I was reading it, I could not help being impressed by its lyrical reconstruction of an event too horrible to remember as real and thus given a visionary sheen. Yet once I put the book down I felt unmoved. The guilt of Belmarch, who shared in the blood bath against the Jews in eleventh-century Mainz, remained an intellectual and literary matter, while the other characters served more as allegorical figures or brilliant pinpoints in a medieval tapestry than as human beings with emotional substance.

Belmarch is the German Everyman but at the center of the novel stands Count Emico on his way to the Holy Land. Emico, in his crusade for Christianity, has decided to convert or kill every Jew he meets. When he enters Mainz and hears of the vast treasure which the Jews possess, he is more than ever inflamed to destroy them. The fact that the Emperor has sent word to desist from harming the Jews means nothing to his obsessed mind. Nor does the fact that the Archbishop of Mainz has offered the Jews protection within his own palace.

The novel opens the morning after Emico's massacre, when Belmarch awakes to remember the orgy in which he defiled himself. He seeks to do penance, he tries to kill himself, he asks for forgiveness from the dying Archbishop, but his sense of guilt pursues him. The major part of the novel is the confrontation of Belmarch with Annas, one of the few Jewish survivors. Annas works a conversion on Belmarch—this is of course the central irony. It is the Jew who has to take care of Belmarch, it is the Jew who has to help the guilt-ridden Christian come whole again. When Belmarch tries to stab himself, Annas kicks away the sword and tells him, "Don't you see? I have my mind divided. I'm divided on it so that I can master it. Don't you see that that's the point—to master the thing? I've mastered this entirely, so don't you think about it. All right?"

The implications are unavoidable. Davis' novel is certain to be read as a modern allegory, and from this intellectual vantage-point, the novel is brilliant. Who is more guilty? The Archbishop who collected all the Jews and their treasure to offer them protection and thus made it possible for Count Emico to slaughter them at one blow? Is Belmarch as guilty for allowing himself to be swept along by the hysteria? Is the handsome knight, who cares more about a Tournament of Love than a Jewish life, equally guilty? This knight, this Aryan Adonis, slays more Jews than anyone because he obeys commands like a beautiful soldier and powerful athlete. Are all the Germans as guilty as Emico? And where does forgiveness start?

In Davis' novel forgiveness starts with Annas and Belmarch in the initiation of understanding that the German's need for a scapegoat is finally wearing itself out. In these allegorical implications the novel is provocative, and undoubtedly *Belmarch* will continue the controversy engendered by Hannah Arendt's recent dissection of Nazi German guilt. Yet as a novel *Belmarch* suffers from emotional poverty. Its word tapestry is clean and vivid, its tableaux of scenes are admirably proportioned and executed, but its people are ideas rather than human entities.

e. e. cummings

73 Poems. By E. E. Cummings. Harcourt, Brace & World. $4.50

by Horace Gregory

THE YEARS immediately following a writer's death are usually a severe test of his fame. After a few tributes to his memory there is usually silence, or if not silence, a small groundswell of counter-statement expressing fears that he has been overpraised. Such was the immediate fate of D. H. Lawrence's reputation, and a touch of the same blight for a brief time stained F. Scott Fitzgerald's—and today Robinson Jeffers and Hemingway are undergoing a similar trial.

Cummings' reputation since his death a year ago is the rare exception to this rule. For the past ten years it has been steadily growing, and the publication of his posthumous book, *73 Poems,* reaffirms a living spirit. This is to say that his readers will feel no sense of decline or of weariness in his last poems. If anything, his lyric phrasing is lighter, more adroit than ever. But why do the poems of Cummings' later years seem more "alive" than those which pleased so many during the 1920's? The first reason is cumulative and may seem very small and strange, yet its reiteration works its way into subconscious memory.

The great majority of Cummings' poems lack periods at the close of their last lines. The absence of a full stop suggests silence between poems and books, rather than a period signifying "the end." This is a way (and by means of deliberate lack of punctuation) of allowing a poem to breathe, to give it air as well as space for sound. Another reason is that his poems held to beliefs in miracles, to the mysteries of rebirth, of man being "continually reborn." This is very like a Bergsonian philosophy of continual "Evolution" or "Becoming."

In the introduction to his *Collected*

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Poems Cummings wrote (and with conscious wit used the word, "becoming" in its two-fold meaning): "We are human beings; for whom birth is a supremely welcome mystery, the mystery of growing: the mystery which happens only and whenever we are faithful to ourselves. You and I wear the dangerous looseness of doom and find it becoming."

Number 5 in his 73 Poems shows how a deliberate economy in punctuation keeps the poem moving in space as well as stressing its images of growth ("blossoming") and the transcendental realities of "dream:"

the first of all my dreams were of
a lover and his only love,
strolling slowly (mind in mind)
through some green mysterious
land

until my second dream begins—
the sky is wild with leaves; which
dance
and dancing swoop (and swooping
whirl
over a frightened boy and girl)

but that mere fury soon became
silence: in huger always whom
two tiny selves sleep (doll by doll)
motionless under magical

foreverfully falling snow.
And then this dreamer wept: and
so
she quickly dreamed a dream of
spring
—how you and i are blossoming

The succession of dreams, a dream within a dream, and "this dreamer wept" makes one think of Blake, but to say Cummings resembles Blake in any other way is quite untrue: so far as English sources are concerned, his lyrical heritage is the line of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Courtly Makers. One of his miracles was to make their music youthful and pure again, a recreation in a new language. In the American tradition, his position is no less singular, for if one does not press the resemblance too far, one finds in his later poems a New England affinity to the poems of Emily Dickinson. This is not a matter of influence or subconscious derivation—and his gift was as masculine as hers was feminine: it is in the sharpened metaphors both draw from nature, in the mastery of a highly selective, yet flawlessly keyed vocabulary, in the dramatic use of aphorisms, in the creation of strict conventions in which their style is so memorably defined, in the transcendental quality of their visions.

for any ruffian of the sky
your kingbird doesn't give a
damn—
his royal warcry is I AM
and he's the soul of chivalry

true to his mate his chicks his
friends
he loves because he cannot fear
(you see it in the way he stands
and looks and leaps upon the
air)

Surely no American poet since Emily Dickinson has written a brief fable with greater clarity, wit, and vividness: and this is still another reason why Cummings' poetry continues to be read and enjoyed by so many. Instinctive as that response may be, and however strange some few of his typographical arrangements may have seemed forty years ago, the sense that his poetry *is* poetry in its ancient meaning is strongly felt. Cummings' songs and sonnets treating of love and death, of immortality, and of spring are among the classics of modern poetry. And his achievement is unique in our time: a lyrical integration of satire, religious feeling and art.

On Madmen

Looking for the General. By Warren Miller. McGraw-Hill. $4.95.

by Thomas Curley

IN A NOTE to the reader in which he disclaims an excess of imagination, Mr. Miller points out that nearly all the ideas expressed by the characters in his book are to be found in certain magazines and books published in this country, and that a small army of Americans share these ideas. What ideas? That there are flying saucers which are the vehicles of perfect beings who inhabit other parts of the universe and who disapprove of our nuclear activities; that these beings, in order to be better informed, have sent emissaries among us who, in order to avoid detection, have been temporarily deprived of any memory of their other, sidereal existence which, of course, is immortal; that ten thousand years ago Atlantis flourished, a civilization greater than any achieved in the cycle of civilization which we recognize. There is more, but that is enough to give you the gist.

The story is told by Billy Brown who informs us in the first few lines that at the point his story begins he had been touched by the wing of madness in Pittsburgh while working on the problem of the thermal thicket. (Those who know what the thermal thicket is don't need an explanation and those who don't are better off. Right, friend?) As you read along, you are likely to think that Billy Brown is just about the worst narrator to give us the news in these matters. First of all, he's mad; second, he writes as Mort Sahl might write if Mort Sahl ever decides to write: "And she will give him everything, asking nothing in return but an unconditional surrender. Slackness is all, eh, friend?" Or, ". . . their homes now house religious orders and ultra (ho ho) respectable research outfits who do their dirty work in settings I'm afraid we'll just have to call sylvan, like it or not. (Certain words have as much power to embarrass us as belches in public, right, friend?)"

Now a madman who writes like that oughtn't to be the one to announce the Second Coming or Doomsday or to issue the call for all good madmen and true to save this sweet apple world from those sane thinkers of unthinkable undreamed dreams. You might think along those lines, but (ho ho) you'd be wrong. It would just go to show you did not read alertly.

Very early on (just to be British about this) Dr. Brown lets us in on his method. Suppose, he asks, suppose Pittsburghers knew what "we" know. "Someday, of course, when the sheer weight and overwhelmingly horrifying bulk of our knowledge become more than we can bear—then,

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well then, of course we'll tell.

"What we ought to do is release it a little at a time, hopefully, like poison to snake charmers, once a month; perhaps, issue a proclamation."

The hint is clear. *Looking for the General* is a proclamation and a plea, a proclamation that wild horses are loose, "rushing headlong toward the ultimate madness." Joyce heard them, too, as does J. P. Donleavy.

They cry unto the night their battle-name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar
their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a
binding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart
as upon an anvil.

And the plea? "Beleaguered pioneers, hold out! Only hold out!" Don't let the Thug-God, that dreamer of the Undreamable, win. Don't let him blow us all, ancestors and posterity included, into the womb of space which may, or may not, be friendly and warm.

what's the cardinal up to now?

(See Outside Back Cover)

Well, all right. Let's all join Billy Brown in holding out. He says he loves this sweet apple world and his prose has gusto, so why not? Only thing is, when he talks about *his* world, it's all urban waste, drab towns, ugly suburbia. The only girl that looks really good to him is one of "Them," the perfect beings in disguise, you know. And what's he do to her (don't ho ho this one, Billy)? He beats her up until she leaves because she won't confess her true identity. That is no way to treat a goddess, and I get a little nervous when I think of those celestial beings reading the messages her human recording machine has stored up during her sojourn among us. What will *their* superiors advise?

Essays on Greene

Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations. Edited by Robert O. Evans. University of Kentucky. $5.50.

by Thomas P. McDonnell

IT WOULD seem that we could do without still another look at Graham Greene, he has been so thoroughly scrutinized these last several years. Such scrutiny, too, has had the ambiguous effect of either presupposing the decline of his powers, on the one hand, or of gathering evidence, on the other, for an interim report of the kind submitted by privy councilors. Critics in the former category—arbitrary, at best—are frequently wrong-headed but always fascinating to read, while those in the latter group are nearly right all the time and just about as studiously dull.

Still, it is not a deadly disparagement to say that Professor Evans' collection seems—at least to begin with—very like a series of term papers in Contemporary English Lit. II. The academic smack is there, to be sure, since each of the fourteen contributors is a member of a college or university English department. So it gives a non-academician a sense of uneasy delight to give the class only fairly passing marks.

But why the exam in the first place? One can readily think of any number of critically vivid essays on Greene—written, say, over the last

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what's the cardinal up to now?

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decade—which would make a livelier collection than the one assembled by Professor Evans and his nevertheless competent group of analyzers. This, frankly, is to put the case for such Greene commentators as Frank Kermode, Sean O'Faolain, Conor Cruise O'Brien (Donat O'Donnell), Mary McCarthy, Kathleen Nott, R. W. B. Lewis, Morton Zabel, and others.

And many others. But it is too often the tactic of irresponsible reviewing publicly to proclaim that the author—in this case, the editor—should have produced a different book from the one you have at hand. In this particular case, however, I'm afraid that it is very much to the point. For the point is that a criticism by committee—and that is precisely what Professor Evans' assignments turn out to be—cannot but diminish the humanity, in art, of its "subject."

It is so critically disposable, in jargon as well as in thought, to submit sentences like: "It is the pessimism of Jansenism that is most endemic in Greene," etc. And this, of all things, from an essay on style: "Much has been excluded in this examination of Greene's style, and the bare bones of his technique have been arbitrarily disassociated from their larger context," etc. Also, it does not seem to me the least profound or revealing—as a reader with a novel in his hands—to be told later, in twelve pages of exposition, that the turning point in *The Heart of the Matter* comes in Chapter One of Book Two. If the novel did not make this dramatically clear in the reading, then I'm not going back now to find out why it didn't.

The committee-critics are no doubt more closely oriented to the so-called theological problem of Graham Greene, but it is crucially unfortunate that their intuitive faculties are so inhibited that they do not see intuition itself as the chief quality in his writings. That is to say, you cannot attribute to him, or derive from him, a fixed philosophical attitude; and this is just what many of his commentators have been trying to force upon him—from, of course, Manichaeism to Jansenism. For example, it is perfectly clear, creatively (let alone, philosophically), that Greene could not possibly have written, say, *The Living Room* from the same point of view that Gabriel Marcel wrote *A Broken World*. He is not that kind of writer. When Marcel writes a play (or entertainment?), he knows exactly what he is writing about in a way that Greene, when he is writing a serious novel, does not.

The most that has been said about Greene is probably the least "true" about him, while the least that can be said is probably the "truest." For Graham Greene, like most other contemporary novelists whose time in history has rendered them something less than the larger-than-life creators of the nineteenth-century novel, is writing from the fragmentation of human experience.

His books, despite their overtly moral overtones, are the intuitive explorations of psychological dilemmas—although this is not to place the two in opposition, since crises in faith have certainly more than one dimension. The point is that novelists today, at least the ones we call good, write more like poets than poets often do—that is to say, they write intuitively and from attitudes which have little enough to do with consciously intellectual disciplines.

Further, it is curious to note, in an age which is supposed to be remarkable for its Godless image of man, that the Christ-symbol should recur so frequently in contemporary fiction. But this, of course, is neither the formal Christology of the theologians nor the intensely contrived symbolism of the poets: it is nothing less than the impact—and, often as not, the conflict—of the hidden Christ-symbol with the free creativity of the artist as revealed in his intuitive and perhaps unconscious longings—and it is without doubt one of the curiously neglected areas of contemporary criticism.

In this context, the critics by and large have been missing the point about Greene, which is that he writes in the intuitive milieu—not in the

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fixed philosophical attitude—of existentialism. His dramatic use of suicide, for instance, is at heart the extrapolation of the present moment into both known and unknown dimensions. And in this ambiguity lies much of the confusion about his fiction. He has himself, of course, more than occasionally contributed to the making of his own myth.

The very astute Elizabeth Hardwick once wrote that the world of Graham Greene is anti-psychological. But this, surely, is to view such a world after the fact rather than in the making of the novels themselves. For the world of Graham Greene, *a priori*, could not be more psychological in its milieu and effects. Also, I do not believe that Miss Hardwick could be more wrong than when she says that childhood, in Greene's world, is irrelevant. All his life, presumably, like most of us, he has been struggling against both the couch and the confessional.

We know from *The Lost Childhood* that Greene in his youth actually did, in one desperately giddy moment, play Russian roulette. Ought we to suppress the uneasy feeling—if it is only a feeling—that perhaps he is still playing Russian roulette in the works of his adult imagination? It is in fact a question that the *Paris Review* interviewers insisted on asking him, especially in its relevance to Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* and to the girl, Rose, in *The Living Room*.

"I write about situations that are common," Greene answers, "universal might be more correct, in which my characters are involved and from which only faith can redeem them, though often the actual manner of the redemption is not immediately clear. They sin, but there is no limit to God's mercy and because this is important, there is a difference between not confessing in fact and the complacent and the pious may not realize it."

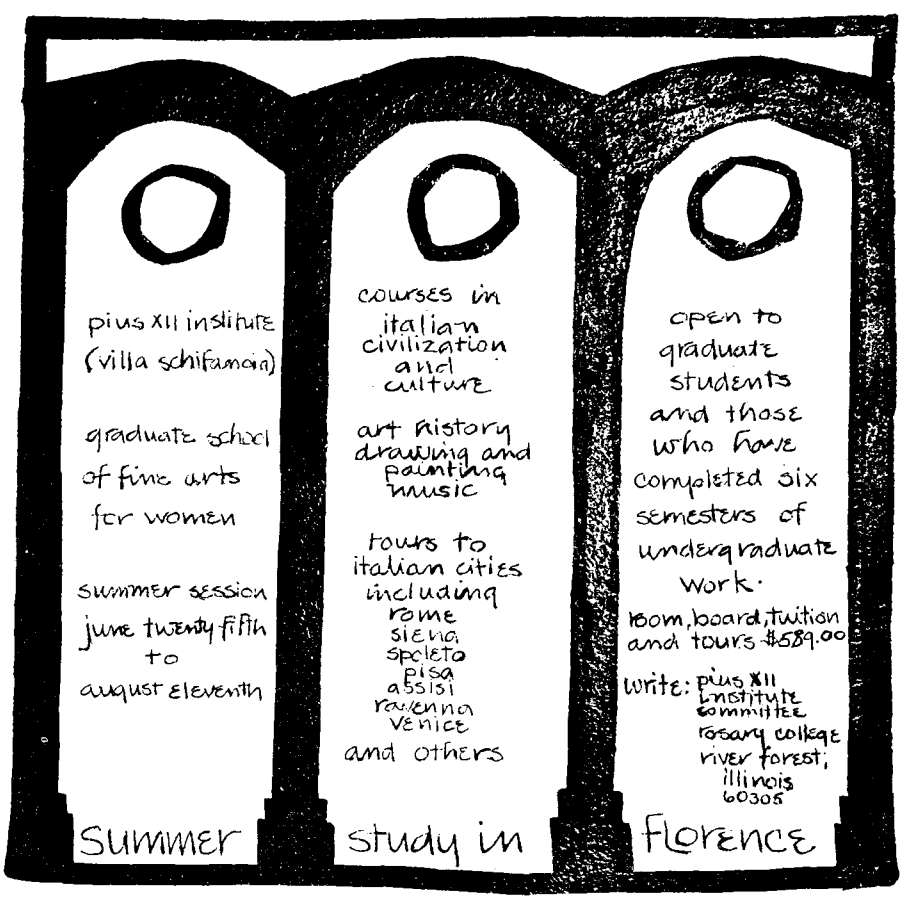
At this point the interviewers suggest that Scobie, Rose, Pinkie in *Brighton Rock*, the priest in *The Power and the Glory* have, in the sense of Greene's explanation, all been redeemed. Greene replies that perhaps redemption is not the exact word. Rather, they have all understood in the end. But have they—and in what way does it matter to them? More to the point, have we, as readers in a shared experience, understood in the end? And in what way does it matter to us?

More than pedagogy is at stake. Even so astute an observer as Evelyn Waugh—though an incurably class-conscious one—has curtly asked and answered: "Where is Scobie? In Hell, of course." And Caroline Gordon, in *Sewanee Review*, once wrote: "My own feeling is that in *The Heart of the Matter* Mr. Greene's craftsmanship would have been better if reenforced by sounder theology; one should not have to ask oneself exactly how a book ends. The ending should seem the only one possible."

This satisfies almost every partiality but the crucial one. Moralizing critics will be satisfied that articulation has been given to the dictum that a theological error must result in the ultimate heresy, while ontological critics will approve their own particular dictum that an artistic error must result in the failure of form. In either case, it seems to me that the failure of form is to be found not so much in Greene's novels as in the critical attitudes which are brought to bear upon them.

He writes, of course, as a penitent—at least a story-telling one—who may very well be seeking salvation, but who would go into the confessional-box only on condition that no priest is there. But this, surely, is a psychological state before it is a theological one; and the critics are attracted more by the trappings of the latter than they are by the sometimes untoward necessities of the former. And, like Professor Evans' committee in *Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations*, they attempt and calculate and devise in every way possible to square the force of moral theology with the humanist "confusions" of lives acted out in dramatic recreation.

It is a critical absurdity, finally, to apply the similtude of such a discipline to the free creativity of the novel, which, in Greene, is humanistic though thoroughly moral and existential though concerned with ultimate ends.



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To the Occasional Reader:

Perhaps you have often thought of subscribing to The Commonweal but have not quite got around to it. To tempt you into trying the magazine for a while on a regular basis (and two dollars for seventeen issues isn't much of a risk) we list here a few of the recent articles you might have missed.

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Education for What?

Gentlemanly Power, British Leadership and the Public School Tradition. By Rupert Wilkinson. Oxford University Press. $6.

by Neil Middleton

IT IS always said of the British upper class that they adore the sound of breaking glass and that they have a seemingly endless capacity for self-preservation. They have survived apparently unsurmountable crises by an ability to absorb rising groups in the social scale to an unprecedented degree.

Class divisions in England have remained both powerful and remarkably unchanged for countless generations; they have remained so simply because every group that has ever represented a threat to the upper echelons of this division has been married into or gulled into accepting the values and honors of the society it was challenging. Had unflinching resistance been the method then England would be in the happy position of, say, France, of whose aristocracy nothing has been heard for some time.

Rupert Wilkinson examines in this book one of the principal agencies for maintaining the *status quo:* the public schools. Some help could have been given to American readers (come to that, to English readers too) if the author had described briefly the working of such a school. As it is the book—already densely written—is rendered obscure to a point by references which few, if any, of its readers will understand. A simple glossary would have overcome some difficulties; "fag" in America, I am told, does not mean a junior boy who performs menial tasks for an older boy in return for help with his studies. It does not usually mean that in England either. Except to those gilded few who went to a public school, "fag" refers to a cigarette.

The House system also goes unexplained and as my concern is to tell you that I think that this is a bad book I shall not bother to explain it either. A further introductory chapter on the working and organi-

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zation of the British Government would also have removed much of the darkness thrown by the author's analysis.

The theme of the book is stated in the very first sentence of the introduction: "How did the Victorian public school produce rulers, and what sort of rulers did they turn out to be?" In addition to an incredibly tedious treatment of this question Mr. Wilkinson adds a fourth section comparing public school education with other total or totalitarian systems of education. His primary concern here is with its similarity to Confucian education which, he maintains, lasted from A.D. 618-1912 apparently unchanged. For good measure he adds further comparisons with rather less pleasant forms of Jesuit education and with Japanese systems.

Despite his copious footnotes one is left with the strong impression that although all of these systems seem thoroughly obnoxious, there are few points of comparison at all. But the bulk of the book is concerned with the public schools of England and the way in which senior civil servants and most members of recent governments have been *alumni* of these institutions.

It is principally a question of values and ethos. Having identified an elite group, the schools make the children want to conform to its habits and values. The latter are a compound of Arnoldian Christianity, a strict sense of duty coupled with a clear idea that one's duty is to lead others, and a feeling that the amateur ideal is a far, far better thing than efficient professionalism. As Mr. Wilkinson points out it is this last point that gave rise to the saw "The English lose every battle but the last." Intelligently muddling through rather than planning for situations becomes the norm.

The advantages of this approach are obvious; flexibility in the face of unexpected difficulties, willingness to turn one's hand to all sorts of unlikely tasks, and, above all, an ability to bend with the wind. "Muscular" Christianity allied to the fierce regime adopted by so many public schools breeds an indifference to hardship that proved to be of inestimable value to countless British administrators in what was our Empire. But alongside all this went a rigid conformity to a certain social group that destroyed any imagination many of its products might have had, and which made them accept unthinkingly the elite culture to which they had been educated.

Few Englishmen think foreigners are real, and even when they do, they feel that nothing the rest of the world could produce could possibly equal the social traditions and standards to which they have been born. The apocryphal Englishman who dressed for dinner in his tent in the jungle was not eccentric, he was conforming to an ethos and a world in which jungles and their like became of secondary importance to "keeping up one's side."

What is of great interest is the way that the public school ethic has become a part and parcel of every Englishman's world. It would have been valuable if Mr. Wilkinson had devoted some time to a complete study of this wholesale adoption of such an *outré* scale of values. My own view is that the public school system and what it stands for is almost wholly pernicious; after plodding through this dreary analysis of it I remain far from certain whether the author dislikes it as much as he professes to.

It is a pity this book is so badly done. It could have been fascinating; it could also have been very funny.

REVIEWERS

Father H. A. Reinhold is a well-known leader of the liturigical movement. His latest book is *The Dynamics of Liturgy.*

Martin Tucker is a member of the faculty at Long Island University.

Horace Gregory is a poet and critic.

Thomas Curley is the author of the recent novel, *Past Eve and Adam's.*

Thomas P. McDonnell is a member of the staff of the Boston *Pilot.*

Neil Middleton heads the London office of a New York publishing house.

what's the cardinal up to now?

(See Outside Back Cover)

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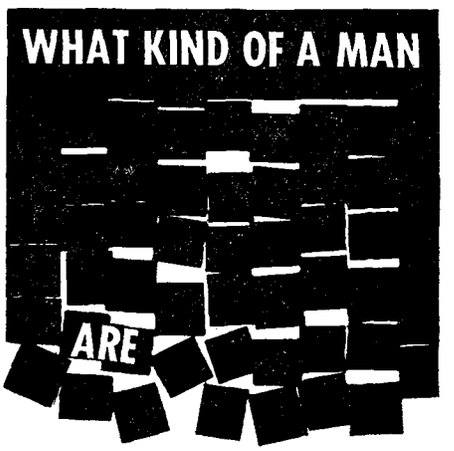

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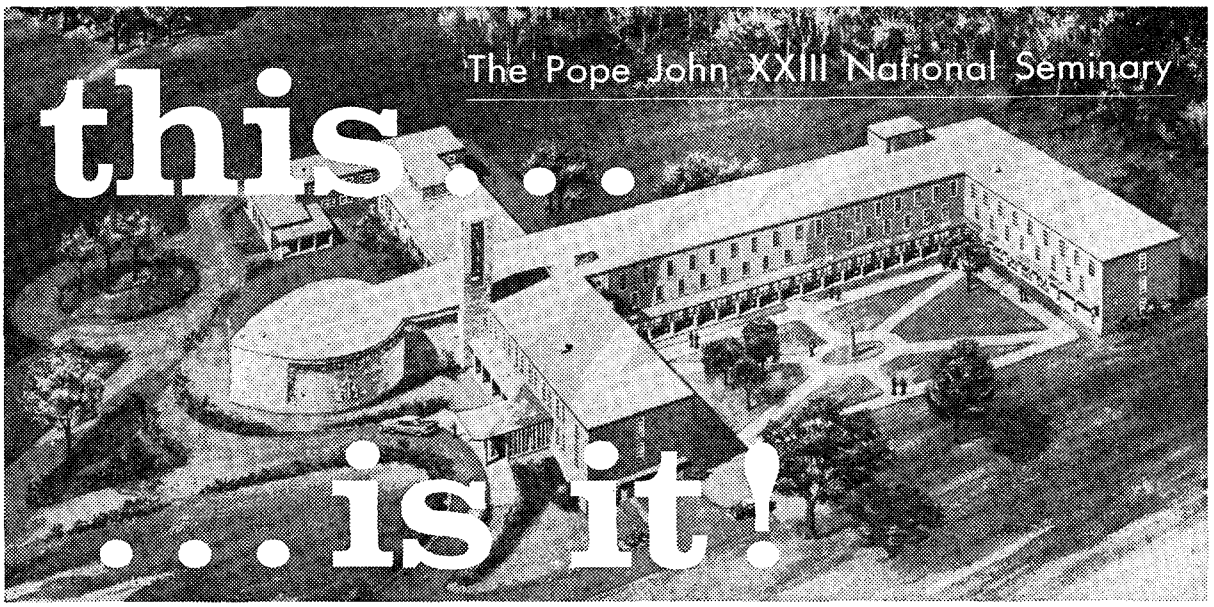

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